

**A TRIBUTE TO THE KINGLY VIRTUES OF SULTAN AHMED I (r. 1603-
1617): HOCAZÂDE ABDÜLAZİZ EFENDİ (d. 1618) AND HIS *AHLÂK-I
SULTÂN AHMEDÎ***

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BY

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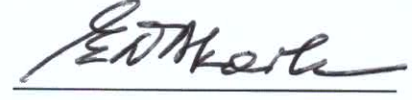
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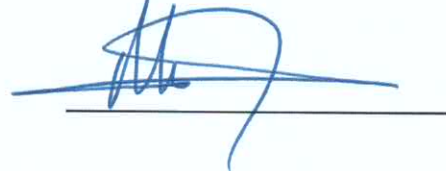
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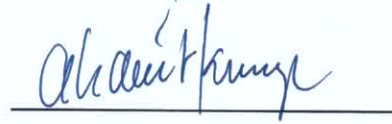
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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to offer a literary-historical analysis of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* (*Morals of Sultân Ahmed*), an early seventeenth-century Ottoman treatise on ethics prepared for Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617). This work of ethics was originally written in Persian in 1494-5 under the title, *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* (*Morals of Muhsin*), by Hüseyin Vâiz Kâşifî, a renowned Timurid scholar and intellectual. This work of ethics was dedicated to the Timurid ruler, Hüseyin Baykara (r. 1469-1506), but the main addressee was his son Ebu'l-Muhsin Mirza. In around 1610, Ahmed I ordered a translation of this Persian work into Ottoman Turkish, a task which was completed, with some critical additions, in 1612 by Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi (d. 1618), the fourth son of the famous Hoca Sadeddin Efendi (d. 1599). Overall, this thesis is an attempt to provide a critical examination of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* particularly with respect to the question of how such a translated book on ethics was used as a tool to create as well as to legitimize a powerful image of the Ottoman sultan at a time of crisis and change in the Ottoman imperial and dynastic establishment. The main contention is that the production of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* should be understood as part of a much larger political agenda carried out by Ahmed I, who, as a young and ambitious ruler, tried hard to present his reign and rule as a recovery from the turbulent years of wars and rebellions since the late 1590s.

Key Words: *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, Sultan Ahmed I, Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, Books on Ethics, Süleymanic Image, Patronage.

ÖZ

Bu tez 17. yüzyılda Sultan I. Ahmed (hük. 1603-1617) adına hazırlanmış bir Osmanlı ahlak kitabı olan *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*'nin edebi-tarihsel analizini yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Şimdiye kadar üzerine detaylı bir tarihsel çalışma yapılmamış olan bu Osmanlı ahlak kitabı, aslında, ünlü bir Timurlu âlim olan Hüseyin Vâiz Kâşifi tarafından *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* başlığıyla Farsça olarak 1494-5 yılında kaleme alınmıştır. Eser Sultan Hüseyin Baykara'ya (hük. 1469-1506) ithaf edilmesine rağmen, aslen Sultan Baykara'nın oğlu Ebu'l-Muhsin Mirza'ya hitap etmektedir. 1610 civarında Sultan I. Ahmed sözkonusu Farsça eserin kendisi adına Osmanlı Türkçesine çevrilmesini emretmiş ve eserin çevirisi meşhur Hoca Sadeddin Efendi'nin (öl. 1599) oğlu Hocaazâde Abdülaziz Efendi (öl. 1618) tarafından bazı eklemelerle 1612 yılında tamamlanmıştır. Bu tez, genel olarak, padişah adına çevrilmiş bir ahlak kitabının Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun kriz ve dönüşüm zamanında sultanın güçlü imajına nasıl katkıda bulunduğu sorusuna bağlı olarak *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*'nin eleştirel bir çalışmasını öngörmektedir. Tezin ana argümanı, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*'nin yazılmasının, genç ve azimli bir padişah olarak bilinen Sultan I. Ahmed'in saltanatını 1590'lardan beri süregelen karmaşık savaş ve isyan zamanlarının ardından gelen bir iyileşme dönemi olarak sunma yönünde yürütmüş olduğu politik ajandasının bir parçası olarak algılanması gerektiğidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, Sultan I. Ahmed, Hocaazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, Ahlak Kitapları, Süleyman İmajı, Hamilik.

To my husband Uğur

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INTRODUCTION

In 1494-5, Hüseyin Vâiz Kâşifî, a renowned Timurid scholar and intellectual of the fifteenth century, penned down a Persian treatise on ethics, *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* (*Morals of Muhsin*). Although it was dedicated to the Timurid ruler, Hüseyin Baykara (r. 1469-1506),¹ it was mainly addressed to his son Ebu'l-Muhsin Mirza.² Later, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Kâşifî's work was translated into Ottoman Turkish a few times, mostly under the patronage of the Ottoman sultans. One of these Ottoman translations was made in 1612 during the reign of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) and it was re-named after its patron as *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* (*Morals of Sultân Ahmed*). This particular translation of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* was completed, with some critical additions, by Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, who belonged to the famous Hoca Sadeddin (d. 1599) ulema dynasty.

This thesis aims to offer a literary-historical analysis of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* within the context of Ottoman political writings in an age of imperial crisis. In other words, this study is an attempt to provide a critical examination of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* particularly with respect to the question of how such a translated book on ethics was used as a tool to create as well as to legitimize a powerful image of the Ottoman sultan at a time of crisis and change in the Ottoman imperial and dynastic establishment in the early seventeenth century. My main contention is that the production of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* should be understood as part of a much larger political agenda carried out by Ahmed I, who, as a young and ambitious ruler, tried hard to present his reign and rule as a recovery from the turbulent years of wars and rebellions since the late 1590s.

Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî can be seen as an example of the Ottoman advice (*nasîhatnâme*) literature which flourished in the seventeenth century.³ Thus, my

¹ Ann Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship," *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), pp. 91-119, at p. 115.

² Maria Eva Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics: Kâşifî's *Ahlâq-ı Muhsinî*," *Iranian Studies* 36 (2003), pp. 601-614, at p. 602.

³ Maria Eva Subtelny considers *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* among the Timurid/Persian works on ethics and political advice in her, "A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics: Kâşifî's *Ahlâq-ı Muhsinî*," p. 601. Also see Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship," p. 439. On the other hand, Marcinkowski uses the term Islamic administrative literature in his, "An Introduction to the Twofold Character of Islamic Administrative Literature: Observations on the 'Practical' and 'Non-Practical'," *Islamic Studies* 41/2 (2002), pp. 271-294. For the naming of this literary genre in the Ottoman context, see Coşkun Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Siyaset Düşüncesi Kaynakları ile Yeni Bir Kavramsallaştırma: İslahatnâmeler," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 2/2 (2003), pp. 299-337. In this study, I will use the terms, "nasîhatnâme," "book of advice," "book on ethics" and "mirror for princes" interchangeably when referring to *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*.

discussion of this work is in effect a part of the ongoing historiographical debates on the Ottoman seventeenth-century crisis and its narratives. Until the 1980s, most scholars writing on the late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ottoman history had typically depicted this period within a “decline paradigm,” while basing their arguments on the writings of the contemporary Ottoman intellectuals. According to this “declinist” view, late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries actually marked the beginning of a long period of steady decline in the fortunes of the Ottoman Empire, a problem which several contemporary political writers also considered along similar lines.⁴ Thus, as Fatih ÇalıŖır puts it, “this declinist position places the Ottoman Empire in the framework of three and a half centuries of political, military, economic, social and cultural decline with a special reference to the accounts known as *nasihatnâmes* (advice for kings).”⁵ Indeed, Bernard Lewis can be easily counted as the best representative of such declinist scholars. By relying on the accounts of *nasihatnâme* writers, Lewis depicted the Ottoman Empire as a constantly declining entity from the early seventeenth century onwards.⁶

However, since the 1980s, as an alternative to this traditional understanding of the post-1600 Ottoman history, several revisionist scholars criticized the decline paradigm for its failings to explain the complexities of the problems that the Ottomans had experienced from the 1580s onwards. They, for instance, posed the question of how a massive political, economic and military entity such as the Ottoman Empire could have sustained over three-and-a-half century of constant decline.⁷ Furthermore, and perhaps more critically, they argued that the Ottoman books of advice used by earlier scholars to explain the Ottoman imperial decline were written by contemporary intellectuals and literati who should have had their own agendas and biases in producing such texts, as will be explained below. Overall, to be able to examine such political texts in an unbiased way, it is crucial to take into account the way they were written and when they were written and by whom they were written. The dynamics and problems of their time should not be ignored. The question of whether words like *inhitât* (decline),

⁴ Halil İncalcık, “The Decline of the Ottoman Empire” in *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 41-52.

⁵ Fatih ÇalıŖır, “Decline of a “Myth”: Perspectives on the Ottoman Decline,” *The History School* 9 (2011), pp. 37-60, at. p. 40.

⁶ See Bernard Lewis, “Some Reflections on the Decline of Ottoman Empire,” *Studia Islamica* 9 (1958), pp. 111-127 and idem, “Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline,” *Islamic Studies* 1 (1962), pp. 71-87.

⁷ ÇalıŖır, “Decline of a Myth,” p. 37.

or *ifsâd* (corruption/deterioration) were the announcement of the decay or were literary devices to convey the Ottoman *nasihatnâme* writers' personal agendas should be kept in mind.

Being inspired by the above-mentioned historiographical discussions, this study aims at interpreting a seventeenth-century Ottoman *nasihatnâme* from a rather different perspective; I will try to read the underlining conceptions behind the lines to understand how such a book could become a tool to present the kingly virtues of the sultan.

Deterioration and Decline in Contemporary Ottoman Accounts

The genre of “mirrors for princes” enjoyed considerable popularity in many pre-modern Islamic societies. They were produced in Muslim Spain, Muslim India, and the Ottoman Empire.⁸ Ann Lambton, in one of her articles, defines the “mirror for princes” as an “important and characteristic branch of Persian *belles lettres*.” She gives the characteristics of the genre as follows: “Written in elegant and pleasing prose and illustrated by anecdotes and stories ... revealing pictures of contemporary society.”⁹

Islamic “mirrors for princes” appealed to the Ottoman world as well. Many authentic works were composed by Ottoman writers, while leading examples of the genre were translated into Ottoman Turkish.¹⁰ As Virginia Aksan observes, Ottoman mirror writers had many models to draw on. They frequently cited the *Qâbûsnâme* by Kaykavus b. İskender, the *Siyâsetnâme* (*The Book of Politics*) by Nizâmü'l-Mülk, and the *Nasihat al-Mulûk* (*Counsel for Kings*) by Gazâlî. At the end of the fifteenth century, all these three works were available in Ottoman Turkish.¹¹ Following the Islamic “mirrors for princes” tradition, Ottoman “mirrors for princes” were generally composed by the members of the ulema or bureaucratic elite since the reign of Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520-1566) to give their rulers advice and warnings on issues mostly related to political and administrative matters. The quantity of the Ottoman *nasihatnâmes* considerably increased in the second half of the sixteenth century and continued well into the eighteenth century. Having witnessed the political and financial hardships of their times, the writers of many contemporary Ottoman mirrors depicted what they

⁸ Ann Lambton, “Islamic Mirrors for Princes.” *La Persia nel Medioeva* (1970), pp. 419-442, at p. 420.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 419.

¹⁰ Yılmaz, “Osmanlı Siyaset Düşüncesi Kaynakları ile Yeni Bir Kavramsallaştırma,” p. 299.

¹¹ Virginia Aksan, “Ottoman Political Writing,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25/1 (1993), pp. 53-69, at p. 53.

regarded as important problems facing their empire and thus offered remedies for each one.

To illustrate, one may give the example of *Âsafnâme* of Lütfi Pasha, who was the grand vizier of Sultan Süleyman between 1539 and 1541. Lütfi Pasha's work is considered as the earliest account in this genre.¹² In his work, completed in 1541, Lütfi Pasha mentions some of the pressing problems at the time, though the reign of Sultan Süleyman is traditionally considered as the "Golden Age" by many successive *nasihatnâme* writers.¹³ For instance, Lütfi Pasha says that when he was appointed to the grand vizierate, he realized the behaviors of the high officials were immoral and the laws governing the whole imperial administration were deteriorated as opposed to the previous times, so he wrote this book to give good council to the future viziers.¹⁴ One may speculate that, by writing such a treatise, Lütfi Pasha was in fact reacting to the new realities of contemporary political and imperial system which underwent significant changes during the first decades of Sultan Süleyman's reign.¹⁵

Another writer is Koçi Bey, who is perhaps the most popular Ottoman intellectual for his *nasihatnâme* written during the reign of Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623-1640). Koçi Bey wrote his work, popularly known as *Koçi Bey Risâlesi* around 1630. The book is about the chief reasons for the disarray and possible solutions.¹⁶ In his work, Koçi Bey discusses the ideal rules of the previous times in order to show the problems of the period he lived in. According to Koçi Bey, Ottoman sultans were personally dealing with the business of ruling and attending to the *divân* meetings to be informed on the affairs of the state until Sultan Süleyman.¹⁷ Furthermore he notes that

¹² Mübahat Kütükoğlu, "Lütfi Pasa Âsafnâmesi (Yeni Bir Metin Tesisi Denemesi)" in *Prof. Dr. Bekir Kütükoğlu'na Armağan* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Tarih Araştırma Merkezi, 1991), pp. 49-99. Lütfi Paşa, *Âsafnâme*, ed. Ahmet Uğur (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1982)

¹³ Cemal Kafadar, "The myth of the Golden Age: Ottoman Historical Consciousness in the Post Süleymanic Era" in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, eds. Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar (İstanbul: The Isis Press 1993), pp. 37-48, at pp. 38-39.

¹⁴ Mübahat Kütükoğlu, "Lütfi Pasa Âsafnâmesi," p. 59-60: "*Vaktâ ki bu hakîre vezîr-i â'zamlık mansıbın fermân buyurduklarında zamânede ba'zı âdâb u erkân ve kânûn-ı dîvânîyi evvel gördüklerime muhâlif ü perîşân gördüğüm için vizâret-i 'uzmâ hîdmetine tasaddur iden karındaşlarıma yâdgâr olmağ için âdâb-ı vizâret-i 'uzmâ mühimmâtını derc ve bu risâleyi te'lîf idüp ismini âsafnâme kodum.*"

¹⁵ Cornell Fleischer, "Preliminaries to the Study of the Ottoman Bureaucracy," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986), pp. 135-141, at p. 136.

¹⁶ Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, ed. Ali Kemali Aksüt, (İstanbul: Vakıf Matbaası, 1939), p.18 (hereafter *Koçi Bey Risalesi*): "*Bâis-i ihtilâl-i âlem ve sebeb-i tegayyür-i ahvâl-i beni âdem ne idüğü ve bi-'inâyetillâh ne vechile salâh-pezir olacağı mücmelen ma'lûm-u hümayûn-u pâdişâhi olub ânen feânan âsâr-ı cemile-i şâhâne zuhûra gele*"

¹⁷ *Koçi Bey Risalesi*, p. 61.

in previous times, and the order of the world (*nizâm-ı âlem*) was preserved; the *re'âyâ* (tax-paying subjects), artisans, soldiers and officials remained in their proper place. However, after Sultan Süleyman, the order of classical *devşirme* (child levy) and land tenure systems (*tîmâr*) could not be preserved because foreigners (*ecnebi*) began to be welcomed. The land and offices began to be granted to the undeserving. The *ulema* were also corrupted.¹⁸ It should be noted that Koçi Bey was a personal advisor to Sultan Murad IV and that he clearly wanted to enhance the sultanic authority of his master while arguing for a harsher measurements in military and administrative matters.¹⁹

Another well-known example of the Ottoman “mirror for prince” literature is Mustafa Âlî’s *Counsel for the Sultans*, a masterfully crafted piece written in 1581 for Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-1595). Unlike Lütfi Pasha, the criticisms are very harsh in Âlî’s *Counsel*. He explains the reason why he wrote this text; according to him, the truth had to be told without any fear to enable the sultan to see the things out of his sight:

All creatures that possess speech are bound to help their kings by counsel and advice ... when they see them in growing trouble because of disasters and catastrophes they should rush to their aid with word and deed, with (their) possessions and (good) intentions. They should put aside the fear and awe ... they should embolden themselves to offer (the king) counsel and advice, secretly and openly.²⁰

Then, Âlî complains about how the government and provincial viziers oppressed the tax-paying population (*re'âyâ*) as well as how the *ilmiye* posts were filled with undeserving men, although there were many talented, educated people to be chosen. Moreover, he notes that the sultan had long abandoned the old principle of being in close contact with high and low; also personal interference by the sultan to stop oppression was no longer feasible.²¹

These Ottoman books of advice have a specific organization to talk about the imperial disorder that they observed and then to evaluate the causes of the problems and

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 20-22.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 18-19.

²⁰ *Mustafa Âlî’s Counsel for Sultans*, ed. and trans. Andreas Tietze, 2 vols. (Wien: Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979), vol. I, p. 24.

²¹ Ibid., p. 25.

talk about their remedies. However, the authors could also write as a result of a personal disappointment or with an expectation to be appointed to better positions, so that they reflected their idealized visions for government. As Abou-El-Haj observes, the Ottoman *nasihatnâme* is a genre with many formal characteristics; therefore, a piece of *nasihatnâme* should be examined in view of its author, including his social status and the social group he represents. Following Abou-El-Haj's points, while examining an Ottoman *nasihatname*, the dynamics of the period must be searched for evidence about the author himself as well as political, social, and intellectual trends in the contemporary scene. The historical context for the reasons of its production must be reconstructed to be able to evaluate the validity of the observations and their social, economic and political meaning.²²

The Decline Paradigm in Ottoman Historiography: Revisionist Approaches

In the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire, which was one of the most impressive imperial powers of the early modern period, went through a series of political, economic, military and social transformations. Declinist scholars were very much inclined to analyze this time as a period of deterioration and/or decline; on top of that they regarded these transformations as events peculiar to a long-lived Ottoman imperial establishment rather than situating it within the larger framework of other imperial organizations. As Abou-El-Haj argues, these historians were inclined to treat the Ottoman experience as “incomparable” with the examples of other regions.²³

From the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century onwards, the Ottoman Empire witnessed a period of crisis in which it faced a set of interrelated economic, political, military and social problems. Throughout the seventeenth century, a series of sultans were deposed. Earlier, the Ottomans witnessed the first large-scale political turmoil and unrest under Sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595-1603). Then, in the early seventeenth century, the deposition of Osman II (r. 1618-1622) and his murder signaled the deepening of such political problems. Overall, six Ottoman sultans were dethroned in the period between 1617 and 1703. Each time, while the deposed sultan was replaced by a member of the dynasty and the “king-makers” did not ask for any alternatives to

²² Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj, “Fitnah, Huruc Ala al-Sultan and Nasihat: Political Struggle and Social Conflict in Ottoman Society, 1560s-1700s” in *Actes du VIe symposium du Comité International d'Études Pre-Ottomanes et Ottomanes*, eds. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Emeri van Donzel, *Varia Turcica* 4 (İstanbul: Institute Francais d'Études Anatoliennes, 1987), pp. 185-191, at p. 191.

²³ Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*(Albany: StateUniversity of New York Press, 1991), pp. 1-2.

the Ottoman dynasty, this choice clearly shows that the Ottoman dynasty did not have immunity against questions of legitimacy.²⁴ Meanwhile, the empire had suffered from prolonged wars and several military defeats by Europeans. Moreover, a series of underage or mentally weak sultans occupied the throne, giving way to increasing influence of imperial women and royal favorites on the sultan and governmental issues. These political crises were followed by economic and social ones. Problems arose in the conventional *tîmâr* (land tenure) system with the introduction of monetary economy and were fused with continuing rebellions and uprisings that were called the *Celâli* revolts.²⁵ So, from the early years of the seventeenth century onwards, the empire had fought against a series of serious political, social, military, and economic problems, effecting its power and prestige. Therefore, this period was labeled as a period of thorough decline by many conventional historians, as noted above.²⁶

However, some scholars in the field of Ottoman studies began to come up with new perspectives and perceptions on the political, economic, financial, military and social transformations in question. They came up with revisionist views on the decline paradigm; they recently began to interpret this period not as a constant, thorough decline but as a period of transformation and adaptation; and they try to show the empire's ability to adapt, to transform itself into a "new" entity that was consistent with the requirements of the early modern world.²⁷ The leading revisionist historians

²⁴ Günhan Börekçi, "İnkirâzın Eşiğinde Bir Hanedan: III. Mehmed, I. Ahmed, I. Mustafa ve 17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Siyasî Krizi," *Dîvân Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 26 (2009), pp. 45-96.

²⁵ For further information on Celali Revolts, see Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası Celâlî İsyânları* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1975); William J. Griswold, *Anadolu'da Büyük İsyân 1591-1611*, trans. Ülkü Tansel (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000); and Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994).

²⁶ For the examples of declinist scholarship, see Hamilton Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1990), vol. I, pp. 173-199; Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); and Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976-7).

²⁷ Virginia Aksan, "Locating the Ottomans Among Early Modern Empires," *Journal of Early Modern History* 3/2 (1999), pp. 103-34; Linda Darling, "Ottoman Fiscal Administration: Decline or Adaptation?" *The Journal of European Economic History* 26/1 (1997), pp. 157-179; Roger Owen, "The Middle East in the Eighteenth Century – An 'Islamic' Society in Decline? A Critique of Gibb and Bowen's Islamic Society and the West," *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 3/2 (1976), pp. 110-117; Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914* (New York: Methuen, 1981); Suraiya Faroqhi, "Crises and Change 1590-1699" in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quatert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 411-636; Rhoads Murphey, "Continuity and Discontinuity in Ottoman Administrative Theory and Practice during the Late 17th Century," *Poetics Today* 14/2 (1993), pp. 419-443; and Pál Fodor, "State

criticized the decline paradigm and its conventional narrative for relying mostly on an uncritical analysis of a few narrative sources, namely the *nasihatnâmes*, and thus for ignoring the biases of contemporary *nasihatnâme* writers.²⁸ This new generation of revisionist historians now discuss the post-1600 period in Ottoman history not as a period of inevitable decline but as a period of “crisis and change.” They look from very diverse angles. While some historians look at military and fiscal transformation,²⁹ others scrutinize how Ottoman provincial government and land tenure (*tîmâr*) system had transformed.³⁰ These new perspectives have thus far proved to be successful in coming up with alternative frameworks and accordingly in locating the Ottoman Empire among other early modern empires, as Abou-El-Haj suggested.

The Present Study: A Different Perspective

The present study focuses on a piece of work written during the reign of Ahmed I. Several scholars consider the reign of Ahmed I as a watershed in this critical period of crisis and change.³¹ They observe that when Sultan Ahmed ascended to the throne, he was very young and politically untested as he had not served as a governor in one of the princely provinces. Moreover, the empire was caught up in continuous wars with the Habsburgs and Safavids and faced the *Celâli* revolts for long years. A year before his succession in 1603, Ahmed I witnessed the most bloody *sipahi* rebellion, which threatened the rule of his father Mehmed III, as well as the execution of his elder brother, Prince Mahmud. Ahmed was raised in such a politically instable environment, and eventually took the throne in the midst of this period of “crisis and change.” These

and Society, Crisis and Reform, in a 15th-17th Century Ottoman Mirror for Princes,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40 (1986), pp. 217-240.

²⁸ Douglas Howard, “Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of 'Decline' of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 22 (1988), pp. 52-77; Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 1-2 (1997-8), pp. 30-75; and Rifa‘at Abou-El-Haj, “Fitnah, Huruc Ala al-Sultan and Nasihat.”

²⁹ Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Şevket Pamuk, “The Evolution of Financial Institutions in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1914,” *Financial Review History* 11/1 (2004), pp. 7-32; Halil İncalçık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980), pp. 283-337. İncalçık, however, had a declinist view in his, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973); and Gábor Ágoston, “Ottoman Artillery and European Military Technology in the Fifteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47/1-2 (1994), pp. 15-48.

³⁰ Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government 1550-1650* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

³¹ For a detailed discussion of Ahmed I's early reign, see Günhan Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (R. 1603-17) and His Immediate Predecessors,” unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2010, p. 13 (hereafter Börekçi, *Factions and Favorites*).

turbulent events affected his character and actions such that he wanted to follow a very different path from that of his father. Ahmed I thought that the legitimacy of his father's rule had suffered from his sedentary style of rule. Therefore, he endeavored to become a active, pious, assertive, just, and generous sultan personally dealing with the affairs of the state. In the early years of his rule, his mother Handan Sultan (d. 1605) and his tutor Mustafa Efendi (d. 1607/8) helped Ahmed I in his endeavors to cultivate a powerful image, as the inexperienced ruler needed guidance.³² Also, throughout his reign, Ahmed I created many favorites who served as his patronage and power brokers helping him in the business of ruling. In Ottoman conventional historiography, the emergence of royal favorites and their increasing influence on policy decisions have been considered as evidences of the weakening power of the sultans and decline of the empire. On the contrary, in this study, I will try to examine how Ahmed I used such favorites to fashion a powerful sultanic image.

In this context, we can observe that several books of ethics were written upon the request of the sultan or his patronage brokers. These books were mostly general treatises on kingly virtues and sultanic justice. Correspondingly, ideal sultans were depicted as just, powerful, warrior, and generous rulers personally dealing with the affairs of the state. Ahmed I probably shared the idea that a sultan who had these virtues was the most important component of a powerful empire. Therefore, he endeavored to create such an image of an assertive, dynamic, powerful, and just ruler. *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was one of these books on ethics produced on behalf of Ahmed I.

This study will focus on literary-historical analysis of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* that is inspired by the above-mentioned discussions and by the works of leading modern Ottomanists who made seminal studies by relying on a corpus of texts, such as Cornell Fleischer's study on an Ottoman bureaucrat and intellectual, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî.³³ Also, this study benefits from Douglas Howard's leading article on the so-called Ottoman decline literature, as well as from Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj's *Formation of the Modern State* and his other important articles on the *nasîhatnâme* literature briefly mentioned above. Abou-El-Haj suggests a methodology evaluating each text by paying attention to its political, social, and intellectual contexts as well as the socio-political position of its author, a problem which should be kept in mind when interpreting any

³² Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 107.

³³ Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

text or document.³⁴ Likewise, Douglas Howard notes that “the value of this decline literature consists in the degree to which it elucidates the intellectual climate of the era, in which traditional Ottoman concepts of legitimacy and sovereignty were the subject of intense debate.”³⁵ Howard basically says that these books of advice can uncover the historical context of the time in which they were written. They can reflect political, social, intellectual concerns and discursive preferences of their period. Cornell Fleischer similarly uses such a methodology when interpreting a large number of Ottoman manuscripts to give “flesh and blood” to the Ottoman institutions by scrutinizing the intellectual and political climate of the period.³⁶ By reading the inspiring work of Fleischer, one can easily realize that texts are not free from the political, intellectual, and social discourses of the period in which they were written.

In the light of above-mentioned interrelated concerns, this thesis will be an attempt to provide a (con)textual analysis of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. I will interpret contemporary discourses of power constructed in a *nasihatnâme* written on behalf of Sultan Ahmed I to reveal how such books could be used as tools of positive propaganda for the powerful image of the sultan.

This study is basically an attempt to make a textual analysis of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* with a broad historical perspective and to situate it in the intellectual, political, and social context of the period. What did Ahmed I do to strengthen his position as the reigning sultan? How did he consolidate his image? What was the importance of patronage activities led by Ahmed I and his patronage brokers to create a powerful sultanic image? What was the role of the books on ethics for the sultan to create such an image for himself? I will try to study *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* in the light of these questions.

The first chapter will thus deal with Hocaşade Abdülaziz’s biography by considering the social, political, and intellectual tensions of the time. This chapter aims at uncovering the life of Hocaşade Abdülaziz, his network of relations and his rivalries with the ruling elite and other members of *ulema*. By exploring the network that Abdülaziz Efendi was involved in, the possible effects of his cultural environment on

³⁴ Abou-El-Haj, “Fitnah, Huruc Ala al-Sultan and Nasihat,” p.191; idem, *Formation of the Modern State*, pp. 24-26.

³⁵ Douglas Howard, “Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of ‘Decline’ of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 22 (1988), pp. 52-77, at p. 77.

³⁶ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, p. 4.

the content and tone of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* will be underlined.

The second chapter aims at unpacking the historical context within which *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was written. The first part of this chapter will focus on the personality of Sultan Ahmed I and his patronage activities. Ahmed I is known to have an obsession to imitate the achievements of his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman I.³⁷ Many of his patronage activities were actually a reflection of his endeavor to create a powerful image resembling that of Sultan Süleyman.³⁸ Studying the manuscript patronage and patrons at the court of Ahmed I will give a better understanding of the historical context within which the translation of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* (*Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*) was produced. It will enable us to see the cultural, intellectual, and political concerns that were prevalent at the court of Sultan Ahmed.

In this context, in the second part, I will focus on the patronage activities of Ahmed I's famous royal favorite, El-Hac Mustafa Agha, the chief eunuch of the imperial palace, and his relationship with Hocaşâde Abdülaziz. These two figures worked together, with what seems a common political interest, in manuscript production and as a result, they produced three books in the name of Ahmed I. Accordingly, in the third part of this chapter, I will scrutinize the books commissioned by Ahmed I or by the royal courtiers in the name of the sultan. The aim is to have a better sense of the ideological functions lying behind the production of these books.

The third and final chapter will be devoted to the literary-historical analysis of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. I will examine the question of how *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* and other books commissioned by Ahmed I were used by the sultan to strengthen his image. To be able to give a feasible answer to this question, I will examine the arguments on kingly virtues of Ahmed I as it is constructed in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* by Abdülaziz Efendi. In addition, I will compare the themes on the kingly virtues of a ruler as expressed in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* with the ones on Ahmed I's kingly virtues as constructed by Sâfi Efendi's chronicle, *Zübdetü't-tevârih* (*Quintessence of Histories*), in order to see the reflections of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* on Ahmed I's life.

³⁷ Nebahat Avcıođlu, "Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny in the Frontispiece to George Sandys's Relation of A Journey," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001), pp. 203-226, at p. 218. (hereafter Avcıođlu, "Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny")

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-220.

An Overview of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*

Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî, as Subtelny notes, “represents a late medieval codification of Persian genre of ethical advice literature.”³⁹ It was written in an elegant prose and illustrated with anecdotes, verses and stories. It was written to give good advice on the issue of government and to reveal the exemplary moral characters of the ideal rulers of the past. Those advices are illustrated through the stories from the lives of prophets, the companions of Prophet Muhammed such as ‘Alî and Halid b. Velid, and historical figures such as Anushirvan, Alexander the Great, or Abbasid Caliph Me’mûn. Also, the writer consulted the verses from the Qur’an and sayings of Prophet Muhammed to illustrate his point and strengthen his argument.

According to Subtelny, *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* “was based in part on key philosophico-ethical concepts expressed in Nasirü’-d-dîn Tûsî’s (d. 1274) *Ahlâk-ı Nâsirî* (*Morals of Nâsir*), the work which exerted the single greatest philosophical influence on the Persian advice literature of the post-Mongol period.”⁴⁰ According to these fundamental concepts, justice is only preserved by maintaining the equilibrium in society which was hierarchically structured as the four classes in Persian tradition. Without the regulating force of the ruler, justice would not be preserved, and without justice these four classes would not remain in their proper place. The strong would oppress the weak, which in turn threatens the order and stability of the society. Therefore, the duty of the just ruler who is “the shadow God on earth” is to keep these four classes in their proper place and prevent the dominance of one group over the other.⁴¹ The ideal ruler must possess justice (*‘adl*), bravery (*şecâ‘at*), knowledge of the conditions of his people (*sâhib-i haber*), generosity, graciousness (*sehâ ve ihsân*) and so on.

Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî was originally written in Persian by Hüseyin Vâiz Kâşifî in 1494-5.⁴² Kâşifî was a well-known preacher, thus his sobriquet *Vaîzî*. When he came to Herat to visit the tomb of the famous Nakşibendî Şeyh Sadeddîn Kaşgârî (d. 1456), he entered the Intellectual circles of Herat. There, he met with poets Câmî (d. 1492) and ‘Alî Şîr Nevâyî (d. 1501), who were under the royal patronage of Sultan Baykara. In a very short time, Kâşifî became a famous figure in the intellectual circles of Herat, and

³⁹ Subtelny, “A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics,” pp. 601-614.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 604.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 604-606.

⁴² Subtelny argues for a later date, 1501-2, see Subtelny, “A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics,” p. 602, fn. 6.

was sponsored by Sultan Hüseyin Baykara who created a very lively cultural environment in Khurasan.⁴³ In such an environment, he wrote his book to give Sultan Baykara's son, Ebu'l-Muhsin Mirza, counsel on ethics and good government; thus its title *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*.⁴⁴

Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî was a popular work in other Islamic societies, especially in Mughal India. It was published several times in India, Iran, and elsewhere. However, as Wickens observes, none of the editions is really critical and some are arbitrarily selective in their use of material. It was translated into many languages, including Turkish. The book also attracted the attention of western intellectuals. The work has been translated, wholly or in part, into Urdu. A more recent translation came out into Tehran in 1949.⁴⁵ Henry George Keene translated the book into English in 1850. Also, Ragıp İmamoğlu translated the first fifteen chapters of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* into Turkish in 1965.⁴⁶

The book was translated into Ottoman Turkish in different periods before and after Abdülaziz Efendi's translation. As far as we know, the first translation was made by Firâkî Abdurrahmân Çelebi (d. 1582). Abdurrahman Çelebi translated this book for Prince Bayezid.⁴⁷ At that time, Prince Bayezid was serving as a princely governor in Kütahya where he created a very lively intellectual and cultural environment. Prince Bayezid sponsored celebrated intellectuals in his court in Kütahya. Abdurrahman Çelebi was one of these writers attending the court of the prince.⁴⁸

⁴³ *Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* (hereafter, *DİA*), s.v. "Hüseyin Vâiz-i Kâşifî," by Adnan Karaismailoğlu; and *DİA*, s.v. "Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî," by M. Nazif Şahinoğlu.

⁴⁴ Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics," p. 602.

⁴⁵ George Michael Wickens, "Aklâq-e Mohsenî," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. I, p. 724-725; Şahinoğlu, "Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî." For the different copies of the work, see Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Summa on Ethics," p. 602, fn. 4.

⁴⁶ Hüseyin Vâiz Kâşifî, *İyilerin Ahlâkı (Ahlâku'l-Muhsinîn)*, trans. Mehmed Ragıp İmamoğlu (Ankara: Doğu Matbaası, 1965); Husain Vâiz Kâshifî, *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî or the Morals of the Beneficent*, trans. Henry George Keene (Hertford: Austin, 1850).

⁴⁷ Adem Ceyhan, *Hazret-i Ali'nin yüz sözü Gül-i Sad-Berg* (İstanbul: Buhara Yayınları, 2008), p. 41. (hereafter Ceyhan, *Hazret-i Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*), p. 61; Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Türkçe Yazmalar Kataloğu*, vol. I, p. 490. For a copy of this work, see Firâkî Abdurrahman Çelebi, *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî Tercümesi*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Reşid Efendi 1077. For a study of this translation, see Mehmet Avçin, "Terceme-i Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî (1a-99b) (inceleme-metin)," unpublished M.A. thesis, Dumlupınar University, 2011.

⁴⁸ Filiz Kılıç, *Şehzâde Bayezid, Şâhî Hayatı ve Divanı* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 2000), p. 33.

Another translation was that of Mehmed b. İdris Defteri (d. 1563/64) who performed as a treasurer under Süleyman I.⁴⁹ Mehmed Ali Ayni writes in his *Türk Ahlakçıları* that *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* became a celebrated book in the Ottoman world right after its production, so people around Mehmed Defteri wanted him to translate this book into Ottoman Turkish so that those who did not know Persian would benefit from it. Mehmed Efendi denied this request; however, he did the translation when an important man wanted him to do it.⁵⁰ It is not certain who this important man was, but he must have been an influential person from the state ranks since Mehmed Efendi could not deny his request.

Yet, perhaps the best known translation of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* was the one made by Pîr Mehmed Azmî Efendi (d. 1582). Azmî Efendi was the student of Kınalızâde ‘Alî Efendi from whom he received his teaching license. After performing as *müderris* in the illustrious *medreses* of the period, Mehmed Azmî became the tutor of Prince Mehmed between 1580 and 1582. He translated *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* in 1566 when Süleyman I died and Selim II (r. 1566-1574) ascended to the throne. He named his translation *Enîsü'l-‘Ârifîn* (*The Companion of the Erudites*).⁵¹ There is limited information in the secondary literature about the reasons for the translation. Adem Ceyhan notes that Azmî Efendi translated the book upon his friends’ request.⁵² However, Ceyhan does not specify who these friends were. An important point to note is that the time of the translation coincides with the production of the well-known work of his teacher Kınalızâde, *Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî* (*The Morals of the Uprights*), which was also a book on ethics, written in ca. 1563.⁵³ Having this in mind, we can speculate that his teacher might also have been influential in his decision to translate the book into Ottoman Turkish. *Enîsü'l-‘Ârifîn*, was clearly widely circulated among by the Ottoman literati and palace circles as evident by the number of its copies.

⁴⁹ For a copy of this work, see Mehmed Defteri, *Tercüme-i Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Ayasofya 2828.

⁵⁰ Mehmet Ali Ayni, *Türk Ahlakçıları* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1993), p. 181; Mehmed Defteri, *Tercüme-i Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*, ff. 2b-3a.

⁵¹ Âdem Ceyhan, “Âlim ve Şair Bir Osmanlı Müderrisi: Pîr Mehmed Azmî Bey ve Eserleri,” *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 1 (İstanbul, 1999), pp. 243-286; For a copy of the work, see Azmî Efendi, *Enîsü'l-‘Ârifîn fi Tercüme-i Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 1328.

⁵² Ceyhan, “Âlim ve Şair Bir Osmanlı Müderrisi: Pîr Mehmed Azmî Bey ve Eserleri” p. 246.

⁵³ For a study on this work, see Ayşe Sıdıka Oktay, *Kınalızâde ‘Alî Efendi ve Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2005).

Another translation was done by Rıdvan b. Abdülmennân around 1574 during Mehmed III's period.⁵⁴ Yet, we lack any specific information on the reasons for this translation. It was also translated by Bosnavî Ömer Efendi in 1621 during Osman II's reign.⁵⁵

Another translation was produced by Osmanzâde Tâib Efendi (d.1724) on behalf of Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703-1730). He named his translation after Ahmed III as *Ahlâk-ı Ahmedî*. This translation was published in 1840.⁵⁶

We can say that this book on ethics must have appealed to the Ottoman world as it was translated into Turkish around fifty years after its production. As can be seen from the above list, it was mostly translated on behalf of the sultans. In the light of these translations, it is safe to conclude that Kâşifi's *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* was probably well suited to the Ottoman intellectual and political culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, as Islamic "mirrors for princes" were increasingly appealed to the Ottoman world. Many authentic works were also penned by Ottoman writers, while leading examples of the genre were translated into Ottoman Turkish from the sixteenth century onwards.⁵⁷

Abdülaziz Efendi's Translation

As noted above, Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi translated *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* in 1612 upon the request of Ahmed I and named his translation under the title, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. Abdülaziz Efendi did not just make a translation; he also added his own sections, mostly in the form of *kasîdes*, on the virtuous personal qualities of Ahmed I. Hence, the translation was shaped by Abdülaziz Efendi's literary interventions to a certain extent.⁵⁸

This 1612 translation of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* has survived in three manuscript copies. One copy is currently preserved at the Süleymaniye Library's Nuruosmaniye section. This copy is crucial for its extended preface, revealing the royal patronage

⁵⁴ Ceyhan, *Hazreti Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*, p. 61.

⁵⁵ Ibid. For a copy of this work, see Bosnavi Ömer Efendi, *Tercüme-i Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*, Kütahya Vahidpaşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi MS 717.

⁵⁶ Şahinoğlu, "Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî," p. 17. For a copy of this work, see Osmanzâde Tâib, *Ahlâk-ı Ahmedî*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Esad Efendi 1806.

⁵⁷ Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Siyaset Düşüncesi Kaynakları ile Yeni Bir Kavramsallaştırma," p. 299.

⁵⁸ Ottoman practice of *terceme* was very different from our modern understanding of translation. Most of the time, we see that an Ottoman scholar, who engaged in translating a text into Turkish, made decisive interventions to the original text by adding his own writings while omitting some parts. For further discussion on Ottoman *terceme* practice, see İsmail Kara, *İlim Bilmez Tarih Hatırlamaz: Şerh ve Haşiye Meselesine Dair Birkaç Not* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2011), pp. 28-52.

behind its production. It is an ornamented manuscript consisting detailed sections on behalf of its royal patron, Ahmed I, and his patronage broker, El-Hac Mustafa Agha. Therefore, given its ornamentation and neat calligraphy, this copy seems to be the final version presented to Sultan Ahmed.⁵⁹ For my discussions, I also use the manuscript copy currently preserved at the Süleymaniye Library's Fatih section.⁶⁰ According to its colophon, this copy was written by Abdülaziz Efendi, yet it seems to be only a draft.⁶¹ This copy composes of 276 folios. Another copy is currently preserved at the İstanbul University Library.⁶²

For most of the quotations from the original translated text, I relied on two master theses prepared by Hüseyin Altınpay and Osman Peker, particularly for the folios between 1a-165b.⁶³ Yet, when necessary, I provided my own transcriptions as well as English translations. In this context, I should also note that these two studies by Altınpay and Peker mainly consist of two parts; the life story of Abdülaziz Efendi and the transliteration of the text. Such master thesis made by researchers in literature departments are no doubt very useful in that they enable researchers to work with a transliteration of primary textual sources. However, neither Altınpay's nor Peker's thesis offers a historical perspective as one would like to see. They instead focus on giving an academic transcription of the text, which lacks any detailed interpretation of the contents or they do situate the text within its historical context. In this study, I tried to scrutinize the political, social, and intellectual context of the period and to interpret *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* accordingly.

In my study, I also tried to come up with a more detailed biography of Abdülaziz Efendi, for Peker and Altınpay do not talk about the power networks in which Hocazade family operated. Since they generally mention the posts that were occupied by

⁵⁹ Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 2301 (hereafter, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Nuruosmaniye*).

⁶⁰ Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Fatih 3467 (hereafter, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Fatih*).

⁶¹ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Fatih*, fol. 11a: “*Bu nüsha-i celîle ceddîm ‘Abdü’l-‘Azîz bin el-Mevlâ el-merhûm Şeyhü’l-İslâm Sa‘deddîn Efendi’nün âsâr-ı kalemleri olduğundan mâ‘adâ kendü hattı kalemleri ile istiktâb buyurmuşlardur.*”

⁶² Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Nadir Eserler Bölümü, MS TY 2756.

⁶³ Hüseyin Altınpay, “Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi ve *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* Tercümesi Fatih Kütüphanesi 3467 (1a-60b),” unpublished M.A. thesis, Celal Bayar University, 2008 (hereafter *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Altınpay*); Osman Peker, “Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi ve *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* Tercümesi (İnceleme-Metin vr. 61a-165b),” unpublished M.A. thesis, Dumlupınar University, 2011 (hereafter *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Peker*).

Abdülaziz Efendi without giving a broader historical perspective, I found it critical to discuss the *ilmiye* careers and the networks of the Hocazâdes in order to understand the historical context within which *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was produced.

An Overview of the Sources

It will be useful to introduce other sources that will be used to write a reliable biography for Abdülaziz Efendi and to uncover Ahmed I's endeavors to create a powerful sultanic image.⁶⁴

A number of chronicles that were written by contemporary historians provide valuable insights into the period of Ahmed I and the life of the Hocazâde family and other top-ranking officials with whom the Hocazâdes had a connection, patronage relations or rivalries. The chronicle of Mustafa Sâfi, *Zübdetü't-Tevârih*, is the most detailed account of the reign of Ahmed I and a central source for the present study. Sâfi Efendi, who was the personal preacher of Sultan Ahmed I, wrote a two-volume history book upon the request of Ahmed I. The first volume is about the personal history of Ahmed I in which Sâfi Efendi portrays the virtuous character of his sultan. It describes the sultan's endeavors to terminate the *Celâli* rebellions, which had been a source of turmoil in the central lands of the empire for close to a decade, as well as Ahmed I's bitterness against those who were wrongdoers related to his care for justice and order. Moreover, one can find long passages on Ahmed I's passion for hunting, revealing not only his personal eagerness to go to war, but also his ambition to re-project the military might of his empire vis-à-vis his enemies just like in times of Sultan Süleyman. According to Sâfi, furthermore, the sultan was a very religious figure; for instance, the sultan's personal attention for always praying on time was a topic of one long chapter.

Sâfi's history can also be used for a discussion of the life and career of Abdülaziz Efendi as well as other members of his family. For instance, Sâfi's chronicle gives important clues about the environment within which the members of the Hocazâde family gained their top ulema positions. More importantly, *Zübde* is very crucial for the arguments of the second chapter. It should be kept in mind that Sâfi, being the preacher of the sultan, wrote and spoke for the sultan. His voice was coming from within the palace; he was very close to Ahmed I. Indeed, Sâfi Efendi endeavored to advertise a very positive image for his sultan emulating that of Sultan Süleyman. His

⁶⁴ Mustafa Sâfi, *Zübdetü't-Tevârih*, ed. İbrahim Hakkı Çuhadar, 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003) (hereafter Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I- II).

chronicle helps me provide a detailed portrait of Sultan Ahmed I, who indeed worked hard to create a powerful sultanic image. *Zübde* will be used in the third chapter as well, as a point of comparison when examining how Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi contributed to the creation of a powerful sultanic image for the sultan in his *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*.

Other contemporary sources that will be used in this study are Mehmed b. Mehmed's (d. 1640) *Târîh-i Âl-i Osmân*⁶⁵ and *Nuhbetü't-Tevârîh ve'l-Ahbâr*.⁶⁶ Mehmed b. Mehmed's account is crucial as he was a contemporary historian. He wrote a history of the Ottoman Empire covering the period between the reigns of Murad III and Murad IV (r. 1623-1640). Since he witnessed the period of Ahmed I, his accounts related to the members of the Hocazâde family are highly crucial particularly in delineating the problem of how they actually reached the top-ranking positions in the *ilmiye* hierarchy. Sâfi Efendi's *Zübde* has a complicated style giving the events without a chronological order and in a sententious use of language. Unlike Sâfi, Mehmed b. Mehmed put the events in chronological order and he had a smooth style. In *Nuhbe*, we can find the information considering the events about the appointments and dismissals of high-ranking *ulema* that Sâfi did not cover in *Zübde*.

In his *Târîh*, Mehmed b. Mehmed has entries about the sultans, *şeyhülislâm*s (chief mufti), *kadiaskers* (chief judge), *kadis* (judge) and several other important political figures of the period. The important issue is that Mehmed b. Mehmed got acquainted with most of these people about whom he wrote. Therefore, his account is very valuable for the present study as he gives detailed information about the high-ranking officials who lived in the period of Ahmed I. We can rely on this source to find valuable information about Ahmed I, as well as to detect the career paths of the Hocazâdes. Mehmed b. Mehmed mentions the influential figures and their appointments whenever he felt necessary. Therefore, we can discover some of the network/*intisâb* relations among these important actors by resorting to his account. In addition, this study has benefited from other chronicles and biographical sources, such as *Peçevî Tarihi*, *Selânikî Tarihi*, *Hasan Beyzâde Tarihi*, *Topçular Kâtibi Abdülkâdir Efendi*

⁶⁵ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbetü't-Tevârîh*, ed. Abdurrahman Sağırlı, "Mehmed b. Mehmed Er-Rumî (Edirneli)'nin Nuhbetü't-Tevârîh ve'l-Ahbâr'ı ile Târîh-i Âl-i Osmân'ının Metni ve Tahlilleri," unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, İstanbul University, 2000 (hereafter Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*).

⁶⁶ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh-i Âl-i Osmân*, ed. Abdurrahman Sağırlı, "Mehmed b. Mehmed Er-Rumî (Edirneli)'nin Nuhbetü't-Tevârîh ve'l-Ahbâr'ı ile Târîh-i Âl-i Osmân'ının Metni ve Tahlilleri," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, İstanbul University, 2000 (hereafter Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*).

Tarihi and Kâtip Çelebi's *Fezleke* in many instances in order to have a better understanding of the period.⁶⁷

We can mention a variety of primary sources covering the lives of important men ranging from *şeyhulislâms* to *kadiaskers* as well as from *kadis* to *medrese* teachers. First of all, Nev'izade Atâ'î should be mentioned. Atâ'î's (d. 1635) biographical dictionary of Ottoman *ulema*, *Hadâ'iku'l-Hakâ'ik fi Tekmileti'ş-Şakâ'ik*,⁶⁸ is an important source for those who are looking for the life stories of people who belonged to the Ottoman learned hierarchy. Atâ'î gives information on the family roots and careers of *ulema*.⁶⁹ He mainly indicates who took which posts in place of whom, but he does so in a way that enables us to see possible relations between the learned people. Therefore, it is a useful source for those who seek to uncover the power networks in which the learned Ottomans were involved. However, the book only gives the account of their careers, as if they were "competing careerists"⁷⁰ eager to fill important posts. As Baki Tezcan asserts, "Atâ'î's presentation of these men reads much more like a history of Ottoman aristocrats than a history of Ottoman professors."⁷¹ Still, Atâ'î's work is a very crucial source for this study in order to comprehend the nature of the relations between these "Ottoman aristocrats" and can help us see the power network built by the Hocazâde family.

In several of the aforementioned primary sources, such as *Hadâ'ik* and *Fezleke*, there is information on which posts Abdülaziz Efendi held, whom he replaced in office

⁶⁷ Hasan Beyzâde, *Hasan Beyzâde Târîhi*, ed. Şevki Nezihi Aykut, 3 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2004) (hereafter Hasan Beyzâde, vol. I-II-III); Na'îmâ, *Târîh-i Na'îmâ: Ravzatü'l-hüseyin fi Hulâsati Ahbârî'l-Hâfıkayn*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 4 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007) (hereafter Na'îmâ, vol. I-II-III-IV); Peçevî İbrahim Efendi, *Peçevî Târîhi*, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, 2 vols. (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992) (hereafter Peçevî, I-II); Selanikî Mustafa Efendi, *Târîh-i Selanikî*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 2 vols. (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1989) (hereafter Selânikî, vol. I-II); Abdülkâdir Efendi, *Topçular Kâtibi Abdülkâdir (Kadrî) Efendi Tarihi: Metin ve Tahlil*, ed. Ziya Yılmaz, 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2003) (hereafter Abdülkâdir Efendi, I-II); and Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, 2 vols. (İstanbul: Ceride-i Havadis Matbaası, 1287) (hereafter Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, vol. I-II)

⁶⁸ Nev'izâde Atâ'î, *Hadâ'iku'l-Hakâ'ik fi Tekmileti'ş-Şakâ'ik*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989) (hereafter Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*); for a detailed study on Nev'izâde Atâ'î, see Aslı Niyazioğlu, "Ottoman Sufi Sheikhs Between This World and Hereafter: A Study of Nev'izâde Atâ'î's Biographical Dictionary," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2003.

⁶⁹ Baki Tezcan, "Searching for Osman: A reassessment of the Deposition of the Ottoman Sultan Osman II (1618-1622)," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2001, p.115. (hereafter Tezcan, *Searching for Osman*). Baki Tezcan likens Atâ'î's work to an appointment register and a big family tree.

⁷⁰ Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), p. 54.

⁷¹ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 115.

and when he received his new position. His career path and his relations with other *ulema* can thus be followed by using these primary accounts. However, the distance by time and by culture makes it hard to give flesh to his life-story, because our sources are “full of stark factual information,” as Richard Cooper Repp puts it.⁷² Still, with some imagination of the period and with having in mind the reality of Abdülaziz Efendi’s being a human, “one can read of jealousies, of quarrels, of friendship, of instances of patronage, of pique and of loyalty which illuminate some aspects of a man’s character, of the nature of the society in which he lived or of the system in which he worked” by delving into such cursory information.⁷³ Also, these first-hand sources will be complemented by articles and encyclopaedic entries written by modern scholars.

⁷² Richard Cooper Repp, *The Müfti of İstanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy* (London: Ithaca Press, 1986). p. 29.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

CHAPTER 1

THE HOCAZÂDES: ABDÜLAZİZ EFENDİ AND HIS FAMILY

This chapter offers a detailed discussion of the lives, professional careers and power networks of Hocaşâde Abdülaziz Efendi and his brothers with the goal of elucidating the historical context within which *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was written. A close examination of the life story of Abdülaziz Efendi, the political and social networks within which he moved, the *ulema* (singular, *âlim*/scholar jurist) posts occupied by him as well as by other members of his family, and of the marriage ties his family established with other powerful *ulema* families of the time will all serve to illustrate how the political, social and intellectual environment around Abdülaziz Efendi shaped his literary concerns. Overall, the aim of this chapter is to provide a meaningful portrait of Hocaşâde Abdülaziz Efendi in relation to the social, political and intellectual realities of the period he lived in. It is useful to examine the careers of the Hocaşâde brothers in two periods: the period during the lifetime of their father, Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, and the period after his death in 1599. The first section will discuss how Hoca Sadeddin prepared a bright future for the members of his family by giving a good education to his sons and using his political power to appoint them to important *ilmiye* positions at early very ages. The second section will examine how the Hocaşâde brothers continued to expand their web of relations after the demise of their father. A third section will scrutinize the career of the Hocaşâdes under Sultan Ahmed I to shed light on how they secured the highest *ilmiye* positions for themselves by using the power networks that were dominated by the favorites of Ahmed I. Finally, a fourth section will be devoted to the question of how the Hocaşâde brothers maintained their relationship with the students of Hoca Sadeddin as part of their extended network.

I.1. A Powerful Father and His Sons: The Beginning of a Heady Career for the Hocaşâde Brothers

Abdülaziz Efendi (d. 1618)⁷⁴ belonged to one of the most prominent *ulema* families in Ottoman history. He was born in İstanbul in 1574/75⁷⁵ as the fourth son of Hoca Sadeddin Efendi (d. 1599),⁷⁶ the famous tutor of Sultan Murad III and Mehmed

⁷⁴ Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 629; Ceyhan, *Hazret-i Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*, 41.

⁷⁵ Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, vol. I, pp. 395-396; Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 629.

⁷⁶ Hoca Sadeddin Efendi probably had more than five sons; Mehmed (d. 1615), Esad (d. 1625), Mesud (d. 1597), Abdülaziz (d. 1618), Salih (d. ?)

III. Hoca Sadeddin, as the tutor of the sultans, was powerful enough to influence appointments and prepare a good future for his sons. Thanks to his father's position at the sultan's court, Abdülaziz Efendi, just like his elder brothers, would quickly turn into an influential figure within the Ottoman *ilmiye* hierarchy, particularly during the reign of Sultan Ahmed I. In sum, to understand Abdülaziz's career as a member of the Ottoman high-ranking *ulema*, we need to examine the environment created for him and his brothers by their father. Therefore, it is necessary to first talk about Hoca Sadeddin's *ulema* career and political power.

Hoca Sadeddin Efendi served as a professor in Bursa until he was appointed to a professorship at *Sahn-ı Semân Medresesi* in İstanbul in 1572.⁷⁷ When Hoca İbrahim Efendi, the tutor of Prince Murad, died in 1573, Hoca Sadeddin became the new tutor of the prince and went to princely province of Manisa where Prince Murad was acting as governor.⁷⁸ According to Baki Tezcan, when Hoca İbrahim Efendi died, Ebussuud Efendi, the mufti of the time and Sadeddin's teacher, had given his student's name as a candidate to fill this post, which would eventually change Hoca Sadeddin's life.⁷⁹

Sadeddin Efendi had always been favored by his royal student, Prince Murad. When Murad III ascended to the Ottoman throne in 1574 upon the death of his father Selim II, he took his tutor with him to İstanbul. Soon, Sadeddin Efendi came to be known as *Hâce-i Sultânî* (the tutor of the sultan), and he gained a very influential place in the *ilmiye* hierarchy.⁸⁰

Sadeddin Efendi was the son of Hasan Can, a well-known courtier of Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-1520). Hasan Can was a highly respected figure at the Ottoman court. After the death of his royal patron Selim I, he continued to be favored by the next sultan, Süleyman I.⁸¹ Sadeddin Efendi must have used the privilege of being son of such a trusted courtier and probably had no difficulty in building a network of alliances for

⁷⁷ The *Sahn-ı Semân* and *Süleymâniye Medreses* were the highest-ranking ones of the time standing at the apex of the Ottoman *medrese* system. Before going through elementary or advanced professorship, a student must have completed his education in these *medreses*.

⁷⁸ Franz Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, trans. Coşkun Üçok (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1982), p.137.

⁷⁹ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 116.

⁸⁰ Ahmed Refik, *Alimler ve Sanatkarlar* (İstanbul: Kitabhane-i Hilmi, 1924), pp. 103-104.

⁸¹ Hasan Can gained the favor of Sultan Selim I and became a trusted favorite in court circles. After the death of Sultan Selim, Sultan Süleyman put Hasan Can on a salary of 70 *akçes* a day and his son Hoca Sadeddin on a salary of 20 *akçes* for the services Hasan Can did during the period of his father, Selim I; see Ramazan Şeşen, *Müslümanlarda Tarih-Coğrafya Yazıcılığı* (İstanbul: İslam Tarih, Sanat ve Kültürünü Araştırma Vakfı (İSAR), 1998), p. 298; *DİA*, s.v. "Hasan Can Çelebi," by Nuri Özcan.

himself and his sons. Following the same path, as will be seen, Hoca Sadeddin's sons used their father's reputation and prestige to extend their own networks so much so that they eventually turned into very influential figures in contemporary politics.

As Rhodes Murphey observes, "proximity to the sultan meant proximity to the seat of absolute power as well as privileged access to a share in the wealth and power wrested in the person of the sultan."⁸² Hoca Sadeddin's proximity to Murad III as royal tutor enabled him to act as a highly effective power-broker both in the imperial court as well as among the high-ranking *ulema*. As the contemporary chronicler Selânikî testifies, Sadeddin Efendi was actively involved in the decisions considering state affairs. His influence on the sultan was so deep that the sultan relied on his ideas even if the issue in question was war. Sadeddin Efendi gained so much power under Sultan Murad that he could "procure the dismissal of muftis."⁸³

When Murad III died in 1595, Hoca Sadeddin lost his royal patron as well as the prestige he gained as the teacher of the late sultan. Selânikî openly writes that upon the death of Murad III, Hoca Sadeddin's good fortune came to an end. Moreover, some of Hoca Sadeddin's clients wanted back the gifts they had previously presented to Sadeddin Efendi, for the powerful tutor was accused of committing injustice against the people.⁸⁴

The new sultan Mehmed III had brought his own household attendants from Manisa, where he had been serving as a princely governor since 1583, and thus he did not need Hoca Sadeddin since he had his own advisors. Upon his enthronement in 1595, Mehmed III appointed his ailing tutor Lala Mehmed Efendi as a government vizier while keeping him as one of his chief advisors. However, the tide soon turned in Hoca Sadeddin's favor again because Lala Mehmed Pasha died ten days later, depriving Mehmed III of one of his royal favorites on whom he relied for political advice.⁸⁵ Hence, Lala Mehmed's death became a chance for Sadeddin Efendi as Mehmed III looked for someone who had the right vision and valuable ideas to discuss state affairs. Safiye Sultan recommended her old friend, Hoca Sadeddin, for this position. According to the queen mother, there was no one but Sadeddin Efendi who deserved to be intimate

⁸² Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image, and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household 1400-1800* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), p. 99.

⁸³ Selânikî, vol. I, p. 191; Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 117.

⁸⁴ Selânikî, vol. II, p. 445.

⁸⁵ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p.119; Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 201.

with the sultan in royal gatherings.⁸⁶ It seems that Safiye Sultan and Hoca Sadeddin were members of the same court faction, and that the queen mother probably wanted a trusted client to be in the immediate circle of her son. Upon this advice by the queen mother, Mehmed III apparently did not hesitate to make Sadeddin Efendi his tutor in 1595.

Hoca Sadeddin once again came to the fore as a powerful figure in court politics. He was deeply involved in decisions involving the state affairs as well as the appointments of *ulema*, as being, in the words of a contemporary writer, “*re’y-i sâ’ib ve fikr-i sâkib sâhibi*” (someone who has right opinion and right vision).⁸⁷ A few days after this event, Sadeddin’s eldest son Mehmed was appointed as the judge of İstanbul upon the dismissal of Şemseddin Efendi.⁸⁸ We do not know whether Sadeddin Efendi had a bearing on the dismissal of Şemseddin Efendi, but this appointment proves that he regained his power as soon as he went into the assembly of the sultan, and began to take necessary measures to strengthen his web of alliances. He tried to guarantee important positions not only for the members of his family but also for the people in his extended network of patronage.

In such political and social web of relation, Abdülaziz and his brothers received their education as well as their licenses to teach in a *medrese* from their father. In the sixteenth-century Ottoman *medrese* system, Islamic sciences were central to the education of any student. Following the same path, they probably had *fıkıh* (jurisprudence), *kelam* (Islamic theology), *hadis* (study of prophetic traditions), logic and oratory courses as well as they learned Arabic and Persian. As we know from many accounts, Hocaşâde Abdülaziz had the ability to write poems in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.⁸⁹ Most probably, without following the established curriculum of the *medrese* education as other students did, Abdülaziz Efendi took his first training from his father. Probably he studied under private tutors and did not receive a formal education before entering the teaching career thanks to his position as a member of a strong *ulema* family.⁹⁰ Abdülaziz took his teaching license from his father around 1595.⁹¹ After

⁸⁶ Selânikî, vol. II, p. 555.

⁸⁷ *DİA*, s.v. “Hoca Sadeddin,” by Şerafettin Turan; Selânikî, vol. II, p. 567.

⁸⁸ Selânikî, vol. II, p. 557; Tezcan, “Searching for Osman,” p.119.

⁸⁹ Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, vol. I, p.396.

⁹⁰ We have examples of this kind. For instance, Ali Uğur gives the example of Zamîrî Ahmed Efendi who studied under private tutors and had never received a formal education before gaining his *mülâzemet* and

receiving *icâze*, he probably obtained his *mülâzım* status (a period of assistantship to a professor after the student received *icâze*) also from his father. As will be seen later, *mülâzemet* system was a determining factor in the creation of networks.

Thanks to Hoca Sadeddin's powerful position at the court, Abdülaziz Efendi took important posts as a *medrese* teacher at a very young age.⁹² Abdülaziz Efendi had the good fortune of being the son of the sultan's teacher, who had a strong place among the top-ranking *ulema*; hence, he was appointed to a high position without exerting too much effort. A *medrese* graduate who did not have powerful patrons would have done more than waiting for his turn to be appointed as a teacher to a *medrese*. As Ali Uğur notes, by the late sixteenth century the length of waiting for a teaching position in an Ottoman *medrese* changed due to several factors, such as the number of graduates, the number of available posts or the nature of the patronage relations and even the bribes/gifts being offered could be decisive in gaining a post.⁹³

A student who gained admission to a *medrese* would begin with the study of the elementary works of Islamic Learning. The *medreses* were classified by the level of instruction they offered. A student who completed his basic training in Islamic learning would proceed to *medreses* of higher levels.⁹⁴ If there were no high-level *medreses* in his hometown, the student would come to İstanbul to continue his studies. A *medrese* student who had the desire to have a place in *ilmiye* ranks would end his way in İstanbul, which was the center of Islamic learning for the Ottoman elite. Moreover, İstanbul would give the chance of having association and building relations with those high-ranking *ulema* who could grant *mülâzemet*.

A student who successfully completed the highest *medreses*; *Sahn-ı Semân* or *Süleymâniye Medresesi*, he could receive his license to teach and be graduated with the status of *danişmend*; therefore, he would be eligible to apply for entry into the teaching career. The formal inscription of the name of a *danişmend* in the register of *ulema* on

starting his teaching career. Ali Uğur, *The Ottoman 'Ulemâ in the Mid-17th Century: An Analysis of the Vakâ'ü'l-Fuzalâ of Mehmed Şeyhî Efendi* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1986), p. XL

⁹¹ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 344, fn.137; Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 629. Atâ'î does not give any specific date for his *mülâzemet*. The word literally means "novice" or "assistant." The term *mülâzım* used for those who were candidates for a post. Repp, *The Müfti of İstanbul*, p. 51.

⁹² Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 629.

⁹³ Uğur, *The Ottoman 'Ulemâ*, p. XLIV.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. XXXIX.

government payroll was known as *mülâzemet*.⁹⁵ After completing his *mülâzemet*, he could enter the duties of the judicial or teaching career.

As Uğur notes, “the practice of *mülâzim* was designed to give a *medrese* graduate a period of practical work under the supervision of a senior scholar before allowing him enter the duties of the teaching or judicial career.”⁹⁶ Although in practice the system of *mülâzemet* would run in this way, the corruption that entered into this system was a point that many contemporary people complained about. Bakkalzâde Hilmi Efendi (d. H. 1014/1605-6) wrote a sardonic *kasîde* (poem) accusing *kadıaskers* of bribery and granting *mülâzemet* in return, even a capable scholar would not gain any posts without giving a bribe to the *kadıasker*.⁹⁷

Apart from the bribery, high-ranking *ulema* within the state ranks could also grant *mülâzemet*. Also, upon the accession of a new sultan to the throne, the sultan’s first military expedition or his victories, and the birth of a *şehzâde* (prince) were various instances when *mülâzemets* were distributed as a kind of gift. Furthermore, the sultan might grant office to certain people who attracted the attention of the sultan with their literary endowments.⁹⁸ Baki Efendi was such a poet that he gained the patronage of strong people in the state ranks and gained important posts in *ilmiye*. Actually Baki Efendi as being an able poet registered as *mülâzım* without waiting and then was promoted to a teaching position by the sultan himself.⁹⁹

As Madeline Zilfi points out, the Ottoman *ulema* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries “possessed a recognized hierarchical path from *medrese* education novitiate through elementary and advanced professorship to major judgeships culminating in the judgeship of İstanbul, followed by the two chief judgeships and the

⁹⁵ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1965), pp. 12- 45; Uğur, *The Ottoman ‘Ulemâ*, p. XLI. When a student had completed his studies at the *Sahn-ı Semân* or *Süleymâniye Medresesi* with the status of *danişmend*, he could be eligible to apply for entry into the teaching career. This required that his name be entered into the register of the *ulema*, but in order to achieve this he had first associate himself with some individual of high rank in this class who, when from time to time on being promoted to an important office, would be entitled to grant this privilege to certain his retainers. This formal inscription of a *danişmend*’s name into the register was known as *mülâzemet*.

⁹⁶ Uğur, *The Ottoman ‘Ulemâ*, p. XLI

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. XLIII: ‘*Allâme-i zamâne olup bir kişi eger/ eylerse kadıaskere yüz bin mülâzemet/mansib açılmaz ana çözülmeyecek kese/ hâsıl budur ki bî-kese müşkil mülâzemet.*’

⁹⁸ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilatı*, p. 46.

⁹⁹ Atâ’î, *Hadâ’ik*, p. 435; Gencay Zavotçu, *Rıza Tezkiresi: İnceleme-Metin* (İstanbul: Sahhaflar Kitap Sarayı, 2009), p. 109.

şeyhülislamate.”¹⁰⁰ However, the *ulema*’s career was not that smooth. As mentioned above, a student had to gain the favor of a high-ranking official to get a teaching license and to obtain the *mülâzım* status. Abdülaziz Efendi did not have any of the troubles that a *medrese* graduate most likely had.¹⁰¹ Thanks to his father’s powerful position, Abdülaziz Efendi’s first appointment was a teaching position in the *medrese* of Gazanfer Agha, who was at the time the chief eunuch of the palace and a political ally of Hoca Sadeddin Efendi. During this time in 1595 Hocaşâde Abdülaziz was twenty one years old.¹⁰² Such a rapid appointment for a newly graduated *medrese* student who did not have strong ties with important people could only be a dream. Abdülaziz Efendi could circumvent the normal career track thanks to the position of his father. There was special privileges for the sons of the sultans’ teachers that they could be appointed to a post without waiting as other *mülâzıms*.¹⁰³ Hocaşâde Abdülaziz’s rapid rise did not stop as he continued his career in *Sahn-ı Semân* in 1596.

By 1596, Hoca Sadeddin seemed to have expanded his influence on Mehmed III. In that year, he played important roles during the sultan’s Eğri campaign against the Habsburgs. Contemporary historians report the beneficial services of Hoca Sadeddin during the campaign. Sadeddin’s political prestige and power must have grown bigger during the campaign when the Ottoman army was about to lose the main battle of the campaign at Haçova, Hoca Sadeddin Efendi encouraged the sultan to stay at the battlefield to encourage the fleeing soldiers to fight back and thus he contributed to the Ottoman victory.¹⁰⁴ Sadeddin Efendi, having proved himself to be a good counselor, was able to consolidate his power in the court to the extent that he seemed to influence appointments. The contemporary historian Mehmed b. Mehmed emphasized that his second son Esad Efendi became the judge of Edirne by the time of Eğri campaign.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, p. 84.

¹⁰¹ Tezcan, “Searching for Osman,” p. 345, fn. 141. Tezcan talks about a newly established college, namely the Defterdar Yahya Medresesi, founded in August 1595. It seems to be reserved for those who got their licenses to teach from Hoca Sadeddin Efendi.

¹⁰² Atâ’î, *Hadâ’ik*, p. 629.

¹⁰³ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilatı*, p. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Selânikî, vol. II, pp. 641-642; Peçevî, vol. II, p. 187. For further information about Sadeddin’s influence on the policy decisions during the campaign see, Hasan Beyşâde, vol. II, pp. 484-513; Na’îmâ, vol. I, pp.111-119.

¹⁰⁵ Mehmed B. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 109; Hasan Beyşâde, vol. II, p. 490. Hasan Beyşâde reports that Hocaşâde Esad was granted the judgeship of Edirne when his father was on the road to Eğri for campaign. Also, a short while after this appointment, he was granted the judgeship of İstanbul; however, Hadım Hasan Pasha did not allow Esad Efendi to take the office. When Hoca Sadeddin was informed

His son's rapid rise in the *ilmiye* ranks can be the evidence of Hoca Sadeddin's influence on the appointments.¹⁰⁶

In March/April 1598, Abdülaziz Efendi was appointed to *Sultân Selîm Hân Medresesi*.¹⁰⁷ This was an important date for his father's career in that Hoca Sadeddin became the *şeyhülislâm* upon the death of his old rival,¹⁰⁸ Bostanzâde Mehmed Efendi in March/ April 1598.¹⁰⁹

After being appointed as *şeyhülislâm*, Hoca Sadeddin's power reached such an astonishing level that he was now able to make and unmake viziers. Such a powerful figure unavoidably created his own rivals and enemies in court politics. When Hoca Sadeddin was appointed as the chief mufti, the Grand Vizier Hasan Pasha tried to prevent him from assuming this important position in the first place. Hasan Pasha wanted the appointment on Karaçelebizâde Hüseyin Efendi or the chief judge Baki Efendi as chief müfti instead of Sadeddin Efendi. However, the grand vizier's plans failed as the sultan appointed Hoca Sadeddin as the chief mufti.¹¹⁰ The grand vizier's stance prepared his own end. Having the post, one of the first acts of Sadeddin Efendi as the chief müfti was to convince the sultan to depose his powerful enemy. Apparently, he was also effective in the execution of Hasan Pasha as contemporaries interpreted this event as the result of the enmity between Hoca Sadeddin and Hasan Pasha.¹¹¹

As Zilfi points out, "a successful father had served above all as the patron to his sons."¹¹² When Sadeddin Efendi became the *şeyhülislâm*, he probably wanted to secure

about this situation, he complained that Hasan Pasha prevent his son's appointment because of his hostility.

¹⁰⁶ We know that Sadeddin Efendi was very passionate for strengthening his network of power, so he tried to influence appointments for the benefit of his family members. It was reported that Mehmed III complained about this situation and said: "When I favored the chief Mufti Bostanzâde Mehmed Efendi, he immediately appointed his brother as the chief judge of Rumelia. When I favored the tutor of my father, Hoca Sadeddin, he immediately asked for the appointment of his sons, who are quite young, to the chief judgeship of Anatolia and to the judgeship of Edirne. For the details see, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi: II. Selim'in Tahta Çıkışından 1699 Karlofça Andlaşmasına Kadar*, 3. Cilt 1.Kısım (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1988), p. 123-124.

¹⁰⁷ Selânikî, vol.II, p. 730.; Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 629.

¹⁰⁸ Peçevî, vol. II, p. 152. The rivalry between Hoca Sadeddin and Bostanzâde Mehmed became evident during the funeral ceremony of Murad III in 1595. Hoca Sadeddin wanted to lead the prayers for the sultan's funeral. However, Bostanzâde performed the prayer before Hoca Sadeddin arrived at the funeral. The new sultan ordered the prayers to be performed again, Bostanzâde opposed on grounds that the sultan had already approved the prayer conducted by Bostanzâde by attending it.

¹⁰⁹ Selânikî, vol. II, p. 731.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 734.

¹¹² Zilfi, *Politics of Piety*, p. 54.

influential positions for his sons. When the chief judge of Rumelia Ebussuudzâde Mustafa Efendi died, the chief mufti Hoca Sadeddin requested his son's appointment to this post.¹¹³ Hence, his eldest son Mehmed became the chief judge of Rumelia in 1599.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, his second son Esad Efendi was appointed to the judgeship of İstanbul.¹¹⁵ Abdülaziz was appointed to a professorship at *Süleymâniye*.¹¹⁶ Moreover, to be able to strengthen his power, Sadeddin Efendi did not hesitate to discharge those who were not from his intimate circle. For instance, he deposed Şeyh Bekir who was appointed as a preacher to Sultan Selim Mosque by Bostanzâde Mehmed. Hoca Sadeddin deposed this person, seemingly for the reason that he had been close to Bostanzâde Mehmed while he had never visited Sadeddin Efendi.¹¹⁷ In short, by the time of his death in 1599, Hoca Sadeddin had already established a very powerful *ulema* family.¹¹⁸

In this context, it should be noted that Sadeddin Efendi also established crucial marriage alliances for his sons with the most influential *ulema* families of the period. For instance, Hocasâde Abdülaziz was married to the daughter of Ebussuudzâde Mustafa Efendi (d. 1599). From this marriage, it should be noted, he had a son, Bahai Mehmed Efendi (d. 1653),¹¹⁹ who would eventually become the chief mufti during the reign of Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687). Similarly, Hoca Sadeddin's second son Esad Efendi was married to the daughter of Bostanzâde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1598), who had served as the chief mufti under Murad III and Mehmed III.¹²⁰ It seems that Hoca Sadeddin did not hesitate to build a marriage alliance with his rival Bostanzâde Mehmed. This incident shows that power networks formed among the Ottoman elites were designated by rapidly changing personal allegiances or loyalties. In sum, such marriage alliances with the influential families of the period helped members of the Hocasâde family to further strengthen their positions by reinforcing political alliances with such powerful families.

¹¹³ Hasan Beyzâde, vol. III, pp. 598-599.

¹¹⁴ Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 576.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 690.

¹¹⁶ Selânikî, vol. II, p. 787; Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 629.

¹¹⁷ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı Tarihine Âid Belgeler Telhisler 1597-1607* (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1970), p. 10-11.

¹¹⁸ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 120.

¹¹⁹ Halit Karatay, *Hattat Divan Şairleri* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2008), p. 128.

¹²⁰ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 117.

I.2. The *İlmiye* Careers of Hoca zâde Abdülaziz and His Brothers after Hoca Sadeddin

Although the Hoca zâde brothers lost their most powerful patron in the person of their father, they continued to have influential positions in the *ilmiye* ranks after Hoca Sadeddin's death. They had no trouble in finding powerful allies to acquire the top *ulema* positions.

Yemişçi Hasan Pasha was one such ally. Hoca zâde Mehmed became the chief mufti upon the dismissal of Sunullah Efendi by Grand Vizier Yemişçi Hasan Pasha's request on 2 August 1601, whereas Esad became the chief judge of Anatolia following his brother's appointment as the chief mufti.¹²¹ Meanwhile, having completed his career in the *Süleymâniye Medresesi*, Abdülaziz became the judge of Bursa in place of Bostanzâde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1626), who was son of the late mufti Bostanzâde Mehmed (d. 1598), in February 1602.¹²² The Hoca zâde brothers continued to rise to higher positions in the *ilmiye* ranks, thanks to a possible enmity between Sunullah Efendi and Yemişçi Hasan Pasha. However, their positions in those ranks did not last long since Sunullah Efendi was an equally powerful figure at the imperial court as well as a seasoned player in the intensified "factional politics" of the period, a problem which Günhan Börekçi has examined in detail.¹²³

Yemişçi Hasan Pasha's failure in the campaign against the Habsburgs in 1603 entailed the failure of the Hoca zâde brothers as well. In January 1603, the political crisis in the capital reached its peak when a massive military rebellion broke out against Mehmed III and his court faction. This rebellion affected the careers of the Hoca zâde brothers, because their ally, Yemişçi Hasan Pasha, was one of its main targets.

The rebellion had its root in the campaign against the Habsburg forces in 1602. The campaign was initially opened to gain victory against the enemy, but the Ottoman forces failed in their mission when the commander-in-chief Grand Vizier Yemişçi Hasan Pasha made serious mistakes at critical moments during the engagements. As a result, after six months of fighting, the Ottomans lost some of the crucial fortresses along the frontier with the Habsburgs.¹²⁴ When the Ottoman imperial cavalry army returned to İstanbul after a long miserable journey, with the disappointment of the

¹²¹ Mehmed B. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 109; Hasan Beyzâde, vol. III, pp. 776-777.

¹²² Mehmed B. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 120.

¹²³ For a detailed information on 1603 rebellion, see Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," pp. 54-63.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54; Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*, pp. 586-587

campaign, they united with the Janissaries and rebelled on 4 January 1603.¹²⁵ They forced the sultan to dismiss some of the key officials including Yemişçi Hasan Pasha who was held responsible for the failure before the Habsburgs, Gazanfer Agha, the chief eunuch of the palace, and Osman Agha, the chief eunuch of the imperial harem.¹²⁶ The rebellious soldiers blamed these men for the empire-wide turmoil, corrupting military affairs, intervening decisions concerning government issues beyond their competence, and for downplaying the threat posed by the *Celâli* rebels in Anatolia.¹²⁷ The rebellion could be calmed only when Gazanfer Agha and Osman Agha were executed and when the deputy grand vizier Saatçi Hasan Pasha was dismissed.¹²⁸

The rebels also requested the reappointment of Sunullah Efendi, who was known to be the ally of rebellious *sipahis*, to the office of chief mufti, from which he had been deposed back in August 1601.¹²⁹ In the midst of such chaotic events, Hocazâde Mehmed was dismissed from his position on 5 January 1603 while Sunullah Efendi was made the chief mufti once again. Esad Efendi was also deposed right after the dismissal of his brother from the office of chief mufti.¹³⁰ Yemişçi Hasan Pasha was too deposed as being the main target of the rebellion. He was eventually executed in October 1603 as he had alienated almost everyone in the court including his own favorites to counter the military rebellion.¹³¹ The Hocazâde brothers not only had lost an important ally but also their posts.

Overall, the 1603 military rebellion directly affected the careers of the Hocazâde brothers. We do not know whether the turbulent events of this period affected Abdülaziz Efendi's life and career in the same way they changed those of his brothers. We can speculate that it must not have had a detrimental effect on Abdülaziz Efendi, for he did not hold as influential position in İstanbul as did his brothers during the rebellion. Indeed, Abdülaziz Efendi who was dismissed from the judship of Bursa in 1602, was already out of office during these chaotic events. Despite the negative effects of the rebellion, the Hocazâde brothers still did not wait too long to be appointed.

¹²⁵ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*, pp. 587-588.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 588; Hasan Beyzâde, vol. III, pp. 690-692.

¹²⁷ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 55.

¹²⁸ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*, p. 588.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 601.

¹³¹ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 59; Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 128.

I.3. The Hocazâdes under Ahmed I

The Hocazâde brothers monopolized important offices of the *ilmiye* ranks from the 1600s onwards. They gained the most prominent positions in the *ilmiye* hierarchy by creating a web of relations with Ahmed I's royal favorites, such as Yavuz Ali, Kuyucu Murad and Derviş Pashas.

When Sultan Ahmed ascended to the throne on December 21, 1603, Abdülaziz Efendi had already worked as *müderris* in the most illustrious *medreses* of the time. He then served as the judge of Bursa between 1601 and 1602. He became the judge of Galata in November 1603, a month before Ahmed I's accession. His brothers Mehmed and Esad had already performed the duties of the chief mufti and the chief judge of Anatolia respectively under Mehmed III.

It is evident that the Hocazâde brothers could easily counter the negative effects of the 1603 rebellion on their career, as they found new powerful allies in the court of Ahmed I. According to Mehmed b. Mehmed, Hocazâde Esad was made the chief judge of Rumelia (*Rumeli Kadiaskeri*) upon the request of Grand Vizier Yavuz Ali Pasha on 14 February 1604.¹³² Furthermore, when Esad Efendi attained such a powerful *ulema* position, he most possibly used his relationships with Yavuz Ali Pasha for the appointment his brother to strengthen the position of his family in the game of power. Hence, Abdülaziz Efendi was granted the judgeship of İstanbul in August/September 1604 in place of Yahya Efendi who was the son of a previous mufti, Zekeriyya Efendi (d. 1592).¹³³

Here, it would be helpful to talk briefly about the career of Ali Pasha who had a significant effect on the Hocazâde brothers' gaining prominent status under Ahmed I. As Börekçi notes, Handan Sultan, the mother of Ahmed I, was influential in the appointment of Yavuz Ali Pasha to grand vizierate because Yavuz Ali Pasha was also of Bosnian origin like Handan Sultan herself. Handan Sultan was very influential on her son as the new sultan was very young, inexperienced and untested. As soon as her son took the throne, Handan Sultan began to create a network of alliances and clients for the well-being of her son's rule. The new sultan needed a qualified grand vizier to manage the crisis that plagued the empire until he could get personal hold of his rule. Handan Sultan probably considered Ali Pasha as the best candidate to fill the power vacuum in

¹³² Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, pp. 109-110; Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 690.

¹³³ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 123.

the imperial government. Ali Pasha became the grand vizier with the support of Handan Sultan and thus of Ahmed I.¹³⁴ Yavuz Ali Pasha would be a perfect ally for the Hocazâde brothers as he was a powerful person who enjoyed the support of the queen mother.

Ali Pasha created a strong web of relations and won the support of many influential proponents such as Handan Sultan. He probably had many rivals, too. Mustafa Sâfi Efendi wrote that Ali Pasha had a name for spreading fear in the capital in that he was very resolute in eliminating persecutors and traitors to run the affairs of the state properly.¹³⁵ This account implies that Yavuz Ali Pasha also must have gained lots of enemies in the faction-ridden environment of the court.

In December 1604/January 1605, Hocazâde Esad and Abdülaziz lost their offices following Yavuz Ali Pasha's death.¹³⁶ Although there were no signs of any intra-elite struggles in the relevant primary sources, their sudden dismissals following Yavuz Ali Pasha's death implies the involvement of the Hocazâde brothers in such struggles against the opponents of the pasha. Having lost a powerful ally in the person of the grand vizier, they probably could not counter the attacks made by his rivals.

Upon Abdülaziz Efendi's dismissal, Bostanzâde Mehmed was again made the judge of İstanbul. Bostanzâde's reappointment in place of Abdülaziz reminds us of the rivalry between their late fathers Hoca Sadeddin and Bostanzâde Mehmed. Hoca Sadeddin's sons appeared to have inherited the power networks created by their father; as well as rivalries.

In the mean time, Derviş Pasha became the grand vizier on 24 May 1606.¹³⁷ As being one of the most trusted favorites of the sultan, he had unprecedented power, such that he could fill many important positions with his clients and could repress his rivals brutally.¹³⁸ He began to make and unmake many important high-ranking officials. He tried to fill significant positions with his allies to be able to discharge potential threats and empower his position in the faction-ridden court. Derviş Pasha built a critical

¹³⁴ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 135. For a discussion of how ethno-regional background was a factor in creating solidarity among officials in the Ottoman court, see Metin Kunt, "Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-century Ottoman Establishment," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974).

¹³⁵ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol.II, p. 1.

¹³⁶ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târih*, p. 123; Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ik*, pp. 690-691

¹³⁷ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*, p. 649.

¹³⁸ Peçevî, vol. II, pp. 305-306.

alliance with the influential Hocasâdes. Immediately after assuming the grand vizierate, he petitioned Ahmed I to replace the chief judges of Rumelia and Anatolia, Yahya Efendi who was the son of a former mufti, Zekeriya Efendi, and Taşköprüzade Kemaleddin Efendi whose late father was the judge of İstanbul, with Hocasâde Esad and Abdülaziz Efendis on 9 June 1606.¹³⁹ Also, the chief mufti, Sunullah Efendi was dismissed on 27 July 1606 on Derviş Pasha's request. He was replaced with the former mufti of Ahmed I's early reign, Ebu'l-Meyamin Mustafa Efendi, who was a protégé of Hoca Sadeddin Efendi and seemingly an ally of the Hocasâde brothers. Therefore, the Hocasâde brothers began to dominate the most important *ilmiye* positions and became powerful players in the factional politics thanks to the intermediation of Derviş Pasha.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Derviş Pasha had a quarrel with Sunullah Efendi, who was the chief mufti at that time. Their quarrel had begun when Sunullah Efendi insisted on the campaign against Safavids, which Ahmed I wanted to postpone upon the death of Lala Mehmed Pasha on the grounds that it was too late in the year for a campaigning and that the imperial treasury lacked the funds for an immediate war. The chief mufti insisted that it would not be proper to postpone the campaign and to send the armies back to İstanbul. It would not be good for image of the empire as foreign ambassadors were present in the capital. Derviş Pasha interpreted Sunullah's insistence on the campaign as an indication the chief mufti's desire to send him off to war. And he persuaded the young sultan to dismiss the mufti.¹⁴¹

The best candidate to fill the office seemed to be Hocasâde Mehmed Efendi. However, Derviş Pasha hesitated to appoint Hocasâde Mehmed as the chief mufti because the two brothers of Hocasâde Mehmed were holding the chief judgeships of Anatolia and Rumelia which were highly prominent posts. Derviş Pasha considered the risk that three Hocasâde brothers would come together and might challenge his status.¹⁴² Having these calculations in mind, Derviş Pasha appointed Ebu'l-Meyamin Mustafa Efendi as the chief mufti. However, Mustafa Efendi had died in a short while

¹³⁹ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 37, 123; Hasan Beyzâde, vol. III, p. 851.

¹⁴⁰ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 226; Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 161.

¹⁴¹ Hasan Beyzâde, vol. III, p. 851; Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," pp. 226-227.

¹⁴² Hasan Beyzâde, vol. III p. 851.

and Ahmed I reinstated Sunullah Efendi because he believed Mustafa Efendi had died because of Sunullah's curse.¹⁴³

Sunullah Efendi was another powerful player in the factional politics. His reappointment would be dangerous for Derviş Pasha. His fears proved to be true. "Sunullah Efendi gave a *fetva* for his execution on the grounds that he oppressed many people and ruined many innocent lives."¹⁴⁴ Finally, Derviş Pasha was executed on 9 December 1606 for oppressing people, misusing his power and misconducting imperial affairs.¹⁴⁵

Derviş Pasha's execution did not have a huge effect on the Hocazâde brothers and they continued to hold their positions. The Hocazâde brothers, now being high-ranking *ulema*, consolidated their power. Hocazâde Abdülaziz and Esad performed the duties of chief judge until 1608.¹⁴⁶ After their dismissals, their positions were filled by Damad Mehmed Efendi, who was the son-in-law of Murad III's courtier, Raziye Kadın,¹⁴⁷ and Kethüda Mustafa Efendi, whose grandfather, Sinan Efendi, had served as chief judge of Anatolia under Süleyman I.¹⁴⁸ It is not certain in the contemporary accounts whether any power dynamics among the rival factional groups in the imperial court were effective in the dismissal of the Hocazâde brothers from their offices in 1608. However, the fact that they were dismissed at the same time alludes to their involvement in such a struggle.

However, once again, we see the two Hocazâde brothers both occupying the top positions in the *ilmiye* hierarchy as well as enhancing their potential influence in the power struggles by using the networks that were dominated by such elites of the court as Kuyucu Murad Pasha and Mirahur Mustafa Pasha. In 1609, one year after his dismissal, Abdülaziz Efendi returned to a more prominent *ulema* position; he was appointed to the chief judgeship of Rumelia in place of Damad Mehmed Efendi. According to Mehmed b. Mehmed, a vigilant contemporary chronicler, Abdülaziz Efendi's appointment was made upon the request of Grand Vizier Kuyucu Murad Pasha, who became the favorite vizier of Ahmed I as he was a tireless fighter

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 853.

¹⁴⁴ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 231.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.; Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*, p. 652.

¹⁴⁶ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târih*, p. 123; Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, vol. I, pp. 395- 396.

¹⁴⁷ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târih*, p. 118.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 120.

culminating *Celâli* threat.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, his elder brother Mehmed Efendi became the chief mufti, through the mediation of the Deputy Grand Vizier Mirâhur Mustafa Pasha in September 1608.¹⁵⁰ This would be an important moment in the careers of the Hocazâde brothers because their power peaked as they occupied these top *ilmiye* positions.

Kuyucu Murad Pasha would be a good ally for Hocazâde Abdülaziz as he was a powerful vizier. During his grand vizierate, as will be seen in the second chapter, the empire was relieved from much of its troubles while Sultan Ahmed found a stable ground to realize his ideal of creating the image of a just, pious, devoted and powerful ruler just as his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman was. The ambitious young sultan worked hard to achieve this end by creating several agents of power to help him to do so.¹⁵¹ As will be mentioned in the second chapter, El-Hac Mustafa Agha was one of these favorites who helped the sultan in image-making. He worked as the overseer of the construction of the imperial mosque, Ahmediyye, which was the most explicit sign of Ahmed I's efforts to imitate Sultan Süleyman.¹⁵² Likewise, literary productions commissioned by Ahmed I and his patronage brokers like El-Hac Mustafa can be considered in this context of Ahmed's eagerness to imitate his ancestor Süleyman and to generate an image of a just and pious ruler.

Yet, in 1610, Kuyucu Murad Pasha went to the eastern front to face the Safavids and to reclaim territories lost to them. The restless grand vizier was very old, and he died during this campaign in Diyarbekir.¹⁵³ After the death of Murad Pasha, his rival Nasuh Pasha replaced him as the new grand vizier.¹⁵⁴ He enjoyed enormous prestige and power as being the son-in-law and favorite of Ahmed I.¹⁵⁵ Nasuh Pasha's claiming the grand vizierate would be dangerous for the careers of the Hocazâde brothers. Peçevî reported that there was a strong hostility between Hocazâde Mehmed and Nasuh Pasha.¹⁵⁶ The reasons for this enmity are not clear, but it might have resulted from the

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 123.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁵¹ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," pp. 233-234.

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 242-254.

¹⁵³ Griswold, *Anadolu'da Büyük İsyân*, p. 170.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 170, fn. 3; Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 41;

¹⁵⁵ Peçevî, vol. II, p. 319; Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 238.

¹⁵⁶ Peçevî, vol. II, p. 331.

rivalry between Kuyucu Murad Pasha, who was the ally of the Hocazâde brothers, and Nasuh Pasha.

When Nasuh Pasha claimed the grand vizierate in 1610, Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi was dismissed from the chief judgeship of Rumelia. Nasuh Pasha might have been effective in Abdülaziz Efendi's dismissal. Abdülaziz Efendi remained unemployed while waiting for reappointment to a suitable position. Around this time, El-Hac Mustafa Agha asked him to translate *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* into Ottoman Turkish. Abdülaziz Efendi translated the book and named it *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*.¹⁵⁷ This issue will be examined in detail in the next chapters.

After completing *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, Abdülaziz was reappointed to the chief judgeship of Rumelia in 1612.¹⁵⁸ In the chronicles of contemporaries, we do not see the involvement of any powerful agent in this reappointment as had been case in previous ones. Hocazâde Abdülaziz most probably regained the favor of the sultan as he had performed an important service by translating a valuable book on ethics for the sultan, who apparently gave immense weight to commissioning such books.

Abdülaziz Efendi held the office of the chief judgeship of Rumelia for two years until 1614. This time we see Abdülaziz in the close circle of Ahmed I. He attended important events undertaken by Ahmed I, like his hunting trips to Edirne. These expeditions had particular significance for the young sultan. In order to impress every observer, he was ordering spectacular military demonstrations as if he was going to a military campaign.¹⁵⁹ Hocazâde Abdülaziz and his brothers' presence in these hunting trips might not be a point of particular interest in that they were high-ranking *ulema* and it was usual for them to take part in such undertakings by the sultan. However, we can also read this proximity to the sultan as a sign of the Hocazâde brothers' power and prestige.

Even more consolidating their position in the court of Ahmed I, the Hocazâde brothers had enough power to counter the power of Grand Vizier Nasuh Pasha. According to contemporary Ottoman authors, Hocazâde Mehmed was instrumental in the execution of Nasuh Pasha in 1614.¹⁶⁰ Although we can presume that there must have been various reasons for the execution of the grand vizier, it seems that the

¹⁵⁷ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Nuruosmaniye, fol. 15b.

¹⁵⁸ Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, vol. I, p. 396.

¹⁵⁹ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 241.

¹⁶⁰ Peçevî, vol. II, p. 331; Kâtip Çelebi, *Fezleke*, vol. I, p. 362.

unprecedented power of Hocasâde Mehmed Efendi, which the contemporary authors ascribe to him, enabled him to bring about the execution of Nasuh Pasha.¹⁶¹

After Nasuh Pasha's execution, Hocasâde Abdülaziz lost the judgeship of Rumelia. He was replaced by Bostanzâde Mehmed in October-November 1614.¹⁶² During the time he was unemployed, however, Abdülaziz Efendi made another translation for Ahmed I again with the intermediation of El-Hac Mustafa Agha. This text was Muhammed b. İbrahim b. Muhammed el-İci's *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde fî Kavâidi's-Siyâde* (*The Key of Felicity for the Principles of Virtuousness*) which was a work on ethics explaining the virtues of ideal rulers. After he completed his translation in 1616, he presented it to Sultan Ahmed I.¹⁶³ At this moment, it seems that he did not have any expectation for another appointment as he went to Mecca to become a pilgrim soon after completing his work. Eventually, he died in 1618 in İstanbul.

I.4. The Hocasâde Network

Considering the top ulema positions they held, the Hocasâde brothers should be counted as a family faction as they clearly supported and protected each other in the faction-ridden political environment of the period. As mentioned previously, Hoca Sadeddin Efendi built a powerful web of alliances for his family while he had a large group of clientele within the educational-judicial and administrative office-holders.¹⁶⁴ His sons no doubt used these connections in an efficient way and continued to widen the web of clients that they inherited from their father.

We can follow the careers of such men who gained their *mülâzemet* from Hoca Sadeddin and continued to be in touch with his sons in biographies such as Kâtip Çelebi's *Fezleke*, Mehmed b. Mehmed's *Târîh* and Atâ'î's *Hadâ'ik*. For instance, Azmîzâde Mustafa Hâletî was one of these clients who gained his *mülâzemet* from Hoca

¹⁶¹ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," pp. 120-121. Baki Tezcan, using the account of historian Naima, notes that "Nasuh Pasha wanted to get rid of Hocasâde Mehmed and asked his steward to kill him. However, the steward informed the sultan about this scheme, upon which Ahmed I questioned Nasuh Pasha. Eventually, the sultan would order the execution of his favorite-minister Nasuh Pasha. It seems likely that Sultan Ahmed regarded the intentions of Nasuh Pasha against Hocasâde Mehmed Efendi a serious impeachment of his sultanic authority. "

¹⁶² Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 123.

¹⁶³ Hocasâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Tercüme-i Miftâhü's-Sa'âde*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 2335, fol. 168a (hereafter Abdülaziz Efendi, *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde*); Ceyhan, *Hazreti Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*, p. 76.

¹⁶⁴ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," pp. 117-118.

Sadeddin.¹⁶⁵ Hoca Sadeddin most probably had acquaintance with Azmizâde Mustafa because he was coming from a prominent family. His father Pir Mehmed Efendi (d. 1582) was the student of Kınalızâde ‘Alî (d. 1572), the famous writer of *Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî* and the chief judge of Anatolia under Selim II. Having *mülâzemet* from Kınalızâde, Pir Mehmed Efendi managed to get important *ilmiye* positions and became the tutor of Prince Mehmed in November 1580.¹⁶⁶

Mustafa Efendi gained his *mülâzemet* from Sadeddin Efendi. He became a *müderris* in *Sahn-ı Semân* in 1596 after serving in number of *medreses*. He was appointed to *Hâkâniye-i Vefâ Medresesi* in place of Hocasâde Abdülaziz when the latter became the judge of Bursa in 1601. After performing as a teacher in number of medress, he was granted the judgeship of Damascus and Egypt respectively. He became the judge of Bursa in 1606.¹⁶⁷ This appointment can be interpreted as a promotion in his career, for this office was close to the capital and he could be nearer to the power circles that would enable him to gain even more prominent positions.

The appointment of Azmizâde Mustafa to the judgeship of Bursa happened at the same time when Hocasâde Abdülaziz and Esad Efendis were selected for the chief judgeships of Anatolia and Rumelia in 1606. This incident most likely was not a coincidence. Hocasâde Esad and Abdülaziz might have an effect in his appointment. As soon as they held the offices of the two chief judgeships, they possibly wanted to secure some *ilmiye* positions for those who were in their network.

We know from the *kasîdes* (poems) and letters written by Azmizâde Mustafa that he tried to continue his ties with the ruling elite when he was holding offices in the provinces. Azmizâde addressed his poems and letters to Sultans, grand viziers, viziers, and high-ranking *ulema* including Mehmed III, Ahmed I, Nasuh Pasha, Hoca Saadeddin, Hocasâde Mehmed, Esad, and Abdülaziz. He either congratulated his addressee for a recent promotion, or conveyed his need for help. In this way, he kept his relations with top-ranking officials alive. As Walter Andrews suggests, *kasîdes* had an important function in creating links (*intisâb* relations) with prominent figures who could provide goods and services. Andrews employs the terms “the economy of gift” and “commodification of poetry” highlighting the material benefits of producing poems.

¹⁶⁵ Atâ’î, *Hadâ’ik*, p. 739. Hoca Sadeddin had many other people in his network, such as Şerif Efendi, Mutahhar Efendi, Ganizâde Nadirî, Seyyid Kasım Gubârî were only four of them..

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

¹⁶⁷ Atâ’î, *Hadâ’ik*, pp. 739-741.

The official granting of gifts or positions in return for poems that commemorated special events or included celebrations were the basis for the economy of poetry. Commodification of poetry was not confined to the palace, it extended to elites who were members of the administration the *ilmiye* corps and the military.¹⁶⁸

Azmizâde's *kasîdes* and letters indicate that he always in touch with the Hocasâde family. Azmizâde seemed to seek every opportunity to send letters to members of the family to praise them for a new promotion or to offer his condolence for the death of a loved one. In these letters, he did not neglect to convey his wishes. He frequently talked about how gentle and kind is his addressee certainly in the hope of gaining his support for a promotion. We do not have exact dates of these pieces, but can infer approximate dates from the specific contexts reflected in them. In one of these letters, he wrote from Damascus to congratulate Abdülaziz Efendi on his appointment to the chief judgeship of Rumelia for the second time.¹⁶⁹ At that time, Azmizade was already dismissed from the judgeship of Edirne and sent to Damascus because of castigating another judge.¹⁷⁰ After praising Hocasâde Abdülaziz for his good deeds and new appointment, he mentioned the sorrow that he felt for being so distant from the intimate circle of his addressee implying his desire to return to the capital. We cannot know whether his *kasîdes* and letters were effective or not; but, he was appointed to the judgeship of İstanbul in 1614 when Abdülaziz Efendi was still the chief judge of Rumelia and Hocasâde Mehmed was the chief mufti. Having a taste for literary productions and for creating *intisab* relations, the Hocasâde brothers probably would not ignore such letters and poems written in an artistic style in order to glorify its addressee.

The Hocasâde brothers were very visible in the intellectual environment of the capital. As noted above, Abdülaziz Efendi translated three books for Ahmed I, namely *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* (*Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*), *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde* and *Gül-i Sad-Berg* with the intermediation of El-Hac Mustafa Agha. Abdülaziz Efendi was not the only person in the Hocasâde family who produced literary works. Esad Efendi also took part in literary circles. He translated *Gülistan* (*The Rose Garden*) of Sa'di Shirazi (d. 1292) for

¹⁶⁸ Walter G. Andrews, "Speaking of Power: The Ottoman Kasîde" in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa, vol. 1: Classical Traditions & Modern Meanings*, eds. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 281-300, at pp. 286-288.

¹⁶⁹ *Münşe'at-ı Azmizâde Haleti*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, MS 1526, fols. 26a-27a. I am grateful to Dr. Günhan Börekçi for kindly sharing this source with me.

¹⁷⁰ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 127.

Ahmed I and named his translation as *Gül-i Handân*.¹⁷¹ What is interesting here is that all these translated books that were presented to Sultan Ahmed were originally written in Persian under the much celebrated Timurid rulers such as Hüseyin Baykara (r. 1469-1506).

I.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to mainly scrutinize the career of Hocaşâde Abdülaziz together with those of his brothers. I aimed to show how the Hocaşâde brothers, functioning like a family faction, were involved in the power networks and politics of the period. In this respect, they were in fact following a pattern that came into being in the late sixteenth century. A few *ulema* families in fact monopolized top *ulema* posts while gaining enormous power and prestige. In other words, the Hocaşâde family was one of these prominent families. They gradually created their own networks of power strengthening their position in the political and cultural circles of the capital during Ahmed I's reign. The next chapter will deal with the cultural environment under Ahmed I in the post-1609 period when Ahmed I began to establish his personal rule and worked hard to create a powerful image for himself. In this sense, I will scrutinize his large scale architectural projects, auspicious ceremonies and hunting expeditions to Edirne. Also, I will examine several books on ethics which were commissioned by the sultan and his patronage brokers to fashion his kingly virtues. Also, I will try to the patronage relation between Hocaşâde Abdülaziz and El-Hac Mustafa Agha as they produced three important translations on behalf of Ahmed I.

¹⁷¹ Hocaşâde Esad Efendi, *Gül-i Handân*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 4203.

CHAPTER II

THE REIGN AND ROYAL PATRONAGE OF AHMED I

The aim of the second chapter is to unpack the historical context within which *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* was written from another perspective. As will be seen, Ahmed I was very eager to revive and surpass the achievements of his great grandfather Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520-1566). He showed great effort to present himself as a “second Süleyman” by imitating the virtues behaviors associated with Sultan Süleyman, who was the ideal ruler in the eyes of Ahmed I. I think, the sultan’s commissioning of many books on ethics mostly talking about the kingly virtues of ideal sultans was very much related to his desires to fashion such an image. In this respect, the first part of this chapter will focus on Sultan Ahmed I and his endeavors to emulate his great grandfather Sultan Süleyman. I will try to have a closer look at his life-long endeavors to realize his plans for reflecting a powerful sultanic image imitating that of Sultan Süleyman as a just, powerful, dynamic and pious ruler. In this sense, I will respectively scrutinize the beginning of his imperial mosque Ahmediyye in 1609, restoration of Ka’ba in 1611-1612, hunting trips to Edirne accompanied by military processions in 1612-1614, wedding ceremonies in 1612 and his literary patronage, which were all conducted as a series of auspicious events to help Ahmed I present himself in the image of his great grandfather.¹⁷²

In the second part, I will examine the manuscript patronage by Ahmed I’s royal favorite and chief eunuch of the harem, El-Hac Mustafa Agha, who was one of the most influential figures in the court of Ahmed I. Sultan Ahmed intentionally created multiple power and patronage brokers so as to search for talented people, because, as Madeline Zilfi puts it, “the eloquent poet, the clever salon guest, the accomplished writer, all added to the patron’s repute.”¹⁷³ In this sense, I will try to understand the patronage of El-Hac Mustafa Agha and his relationship with Hocaşâde Abdülaziz. I think that they came together for their shared interest in literature; they produced three books on ethics on behalf of Sultan Ahmed I. In this sense, they helped the sultan to strengthen his Süleymanic image.

In the third and final part, I will examine the books on ethics that were both personally commissioned by Ahmed I as well as by his courtiers on behalf of the sultan.

¹⁷² Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” p. 242.

¹⁷³ Zilfi, *Politics of Piety*, p. 95.

Overall, such a study of the books presented to Ahmed I will serve to better understand the ideological functions lying behind the production of those manuscripts. It is thus crucial to uncover Ahmed I's literary patronage in order to give a much more nuanced understanding of the historical circumstances within which the translation of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* was carried out.

II.1. An Overview of Ahmed I's Reign

From the very beginning of his rule, Ahmed I wanted to portray himself as a warrior sultan as, by his time, it was still expected from the Ottoman sultans to conquer new lands, thus expanding the imperial territories. To respond to such expectations, Sultan Ahmed presented a very lively persona. As Nebahat Avcioğlu discusses, young Ahmed was very eager to follow in the footsteps of Sultan Süleyman, who was regarded by the Ottomans as a true warrior sultan under whom the territories of the empire had expanded at an unprecedented scale. In a sense, the immediate successors of Sultan Süleyman, including Ahmed I, were judged by these standards.¹⁷⁴ Sultan Süleyman's successors, particularly Selim II and Murad III, did not personally join any military campaign.¹⁷⁵ As opposed to these predecessors, Ahmed I wanted to be a warrior sultan. He tried to create an image of a just, pious and active ruler just like his great grandfather Süleyman; the hallmark of his reign would be impartial justice.¹⁷⁶

Hence, immediately after the death of his mother in 1605, he decided to personally lead a campaign to Bursa against *Celâli* rebellions with the encouragement of Nasuh Pasha, who was recently entrusted with the command of government forces against the *Celâlis*, and defeated by one of the most famous rebels, Tavil Halil.¹⁷⁷ The sixteen-year-old Ahmed was very influenced by Nasuh Pasha's claims that the *Celâlis* were oppressing people in Bursa and approaching the capital and that the rebels could only give up fighting if they saw the sultan personally leading the imperial army. Therefore, Ahmed I decided to fight against the enemy although his royal tutor, the

¹⁷⁴ Nebahat Avcioğlu, "Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny," p. 218.

¹⁷⁵ Gülrü Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), p. 28.

¹⁷⁶ Cornell Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân" in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps: Actes du colloque de Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), pp. 159-177, at p. 164; For a detailed study on processes involved in the making of Sultan Süleyman's image, see Zeynep Nevin Yelçe, "The Making of Sultan Süleyman: A Study of Process/es of Image-Making and Reputation Management," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Sabancı University, 2009.

¹⁷⁷ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 119; Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*, pp. 645-646.

mufti and other viziers tried to persuade him that this would be very dangerous on the ground that the sea was not pleasant.¹⁷⁸ Ahmed wanted to show his “assertiveness” in ruling the empire. As Börekçi suggests, he wanted to present himself as the opposite of his father for he thought that the legitimacy of his father had suffered because of his style of sedentary rule while the imperial affairs necessitated the direct involvement of the sultan in times of crisis.¹⁷⁹

Therefore, as Börekçi observes, he did not consider the objection of his advisors and departed for the campaign, but it lasted in two weeks, and ended in because of the harsh weather conditions, lack of a proper plan for the expedition and Ahmed I’s illness due to either cold weather or drinking contaminated water. Therefore, the assertive sultan was forced to cancel the campaign. Instead of fighting with *Celâlis*, Ahmed visited the tombs of his ancestors in Bursa. Having realized the hardships of war, Ahmed agreed to pardon a hundred *Celâli* rebels who came to the sultan in order to ask for forgiveness before returning to the capital.¹⁸⁰ The Bursa campaign remained his one and only military activity. A short time after, he wanted to campaign against the Safavi Shah Abbas I (r. 1588-1629); yet, his tutor Mustafa Efendi managed to change his mind. Nevertheless, the young sultan never gave up his desire to campaign in person as long as the empire was at war. As we will see later in this chapter, the sultan continued to present the image of a warrior sultan by frequently conducting hunting trips and trying to imitate Sultan Süleyman I in other ways.¹⁸¹

Although the sultan was forced to cancel the Bursa campaign and pardoned many *Celâli* rebels, the conflict with the *Celâlis* had not been completed. Ahmed’s decision to appoint Kuyucu Murad Pasha as the grand vizier proved to be right. Kuyucu Murad Pasha’s grand vizierate was a turning point for Ahmed I’s rule. Murad Pasha was a very successful in repressing the rebels. He fought adamantly against the *Celâli* rebels. The favorable Zitvatoruk peace treaty he signed with Habsburgs and his consequent appointment as the commander-in-chief of all Ottoman forces bolstered his self-

¹⁷⁸ Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” p. 123; Hasan Beyzâde, vol. III, p. 867.

¹⁷⁹ Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” p. 107.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 124; William Griswold, *Anadolu’da Büyük İsyân 1591-1611* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), pp. 42-44; Abdülkâdir Efendi, vol. I, pp. 425-42; Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, pp. 41-44.

¹⁸¹ Börekçi, *Factions ans Favorites*, p. 124.

confidence.¹⁸² He managed to uplift the empire from the *Celâli* problem that troubled it for many years.

Thanks to Kuyucu Murad Pasha's success over the *Celâli* revolts in 1609, Ahmed found a stable ground to realize his projects to solidify his image as a powerful, just, and pious ruler.¹⁸³ Also, we can consider the heavy production of books on ethics under the last ten years of his rule in the context of his endeavor to create a Süleymanic image.

II.2. Ahmed I and his Endeavor to Become a "Second Süleyman"

Ahmed I wanted to present a very powerful sultanic image. He wanted to distance himself from his father's much damaged reputation and to create an image of an assertive sultan who was personally involved in the business of ruling. Hence, he took his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman as his model. According to a contemporary European account, as Börekçi observes, Ahmed I had the desire to create an empire which is more prosperous than previous times by emulating his ancestor's virtuous behaviors.¹⁸⁴ Likewise, Avcioğlu, in her outstanding article refers to another European source, a letter written by a foreign author addressed to a Jesuit priest, according to which Ahmed I wanted to become the next Süleyman the magnificent.¹⁸⁵ In this sense, I will examine Ahmed I's endeavors to present himself in the perceived image of his ancestor Sultan Süleyman. I will examine the construction of Ahmediyye, the restoration of the Ka'ba, his hunting trips to Edirne, auspicious ceremonies, and commissioning of books as evidences of his desire to become a "Second Süleyman."

II.2.1 Ahmediyye: A Sign of Piety

Ahmed I took the necessary steps to initiate his expensive project, the construction of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque (Ahmediyye), in October 1609.¹⁸⁶ Ahmediyye, also known as Blue Mosque, was the cornerstone of Ahmed I's image-making endeavors because an imperial mosque would be the visual expression of his wealth, power, and piety. By ordering the construction of such a magnificent building, the pious sultan wanted to

¹⁸² Griswold, *Anadolu'da Büyük İsyân*, pp. 105-168.

¹⁸³ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 234.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109

¹⁸⁵ Avcioğlu, "Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny," p. 219.

¹⁸⁶ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 51; For the patronage activities in the court of Sultan Süleyman, see Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kânûn for the State, A Canon For the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture" in *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps*, pp. 195-215.

leave an eternal sign proving that he was a good ruler. To quote Howard Crane, “the imperial mosques stood as silent but ever present affirmations of the wealth, power, piety, permanence, and majesty of the Ottoman dynasty, of the sultans who were their builders and of the social order that these rulers embodied.”¹⁸⁷ Thus, he began his imperial mosque project in 1609 and completed it by 1616.

His desire to build a new imperial mosque did not go uncontested. Ahmediyye created discontent among some of the senior *ulema* in that the sultan had not won a major victory that would legitimize commissioning such an expensive project.¹⁸⁸ It was expected for a ruler to construct an imperial mosque using booty gained from new victories.¹⁸⁹ Ahmed I did not have the victory or the booty. Yet, the young sultan was so obsessed with imitating and even surpassing Sultan Süleyman that, as Necipoglu suggests, he broke this tradition. He built his mosque with a desire of recapturing the glorious past in spite of the protests of the *ulema*.¹⁹⁰

It was the custom that every Ottoman sultan had to begin his reign with a major victory as a sign of his ability for rule.¹⁹¹ The suppression of *Celâli* revolts in Anatolia in 1609 helped Ahmed to present himself triumphantly, like Süleyman. Indeed, for Ahmed I, the victory against *Celâlis*, which was a long-lasting trouble that he inherited from earlier times, made him a victorious sultan, proving his capacity to safeguard peace. Hence, immediately after the success of Kuyucu Murad Pasha against the rebels, the sultan ordered the construction of his mosque. As Nebahat Avcioğlu relates, Ahmed used this victory over the rebels as an excuse to build a royal mosque carrying his own name.¹⁹² We can find the traces of this justification in the chronicle of Mustafa Sâfi who was the sultan’s personal imam and chronicler. He states that the sultan could not find the opportunity for the construction of his mosque because of ongoing wars with *Celâli*

¹⁸⁷ Howard Crane, “The Ottoman Sultan’s Mosque: Icons of Imperial Legitimacy” in *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order*, eds. Irene A. Bierman, Rifa‘at Abou-El-Haj and Donald Preziosi (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1991), pp. 173-243, at p. 204.

¹⁸⁸ Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, p. 515; Avcioğlu, “Ahmed I and the Allegories of Tyranny,” p. 219.

¹⁸⁹ Crane, “The Ottoman Sultan’s Mosque: Icons of Imperial Legitimacy,” p. 204.

¹⁹⁰ Gülru Necipoglu, “The Süleymaniye Complex in İstanbul: An Interpretation,” *Muqamas* 3 (1985), pp. 92-117, at p. 113.

¹⁹¹ Halil İnalcık, “State, Sovereignty, and Law Under the Reign of Sultan Süleyman” in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar (İstanbul: ISIS, 1993), pp. 70-94, at p. 67

¹⁹² Avcioğlu, “Ahmed I and The Allegories of Tyranny,” p.219.

rebels.¹⁹³ Therefore, he depicts the construction of the Ahmediyye as a sign of the victory against *Celâlis*, probably with an intention to justify the project.

Ahmed I wanted to build his mosque in the place known as *At Meydanı* near Hagia Sophia and the Topkapı Palace. For this reason, the sultan sent Mustafa Agha to Hocazâde Mehmed Efendi, the chief mufti of the time, to get his legal opinion (*fetvâ*). However, the chief mufti did not want to issue the necessary *fetva* in order for the mosque to be built on the grounds that there was not a sufficiently large Muslim community in that neighborhood to fill the mosque. However, El-Hac Mustafa Agha, who was one of the strongest favorites of the sultan being the chief eunuch of the imperial harem and overseer of the construction, had the chief mufti issue the necessary *fetvâ*, claiming that once the mosque was built, it would not be hard to find such a community.¹⁹⁴ Ahmed I and his patronage broker Mustafa Agha seem to have totally disregarded the discontent among the conservative *ulema*.

Also, the selected site housed many mansions owned by palace grandees and other buildings that has to be demolished to clear the site for construction. Ahmed paid more for those buildings than their price.¹⁹⁵ For instance, he paid 30,000 gold *akçes* for Ayşe Sultan's mansion, which was at the exact construction site of the mosque.¹⁹⁶ Sâfi explains the reasons for demolishing those buildings with the suitability of that place for a mosque. It is close to the sea and has good air. Also, it is near the palace and very lively and crowded, so such a crowded place would be the most suitable place for a mosque to be built.¹⁹⁷

Ahmed was very excited by his project. He was present at the opening ceremony together with Kuyucu Murad Pasha, who opened the way for Ahmed I to realize his projects by being successful against *Celâlis* as indicated above. Also, the chief mufti Hocazâde Mehmed, the chief judge of Rumelia Hocazâde Abdülaziz, other senior members of the *ulema* corps and Şeyh Mahmud Hüdayi Efendi, who was a prominent

¹⁹³ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 48.

¹⁹⁴ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, pp. 49-51. Tülay Artan, "Arts and Architecture" in *Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. III, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 408-480, at pp. 450-53.

¹⁹⁵ See for the buildings that were demolished to open the site for the mosque; Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Risale-i Mimariye: Mimar Mehmed Ağa Eserleri" in *İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı'ya Armağan* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1976), pp. 113-215, at pp. 158-160; For a study on *Risale-i Mimariye*, see Selen Morkoç, *A Study of Ottoman Narratives on Architecture: Text, Context and Hermeneutics* (Bethesda, Dublin, Palo Alto: Academica Press, 2010), pp. 60-72.

¹⁹⁶ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 50.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Sufi master, were present during the ceremony. According to Sâfi, Ahmed I modestly worked at the foundation site of the mosque by digging the ground. A feast was organized and substantial meals were prepared for the participants, especially for those who were needy.¹⁹⁸ He was declaring his power by this ostentatious state ceremony. The opening ceremony was a chance for Ahmed to show himself triumphantly in ways reminiscent of his great grandfather Süleyman. This was an important moment because the mosque would be the proof of his concern for justice, piety and power. Woodhead notes that sultanic authority would be evident in the eyes of the subjects through the building of public buildings such as mosques, colleges, roads, bridges, etc.¹⁹⁹

As Antony Black notes, adherence to Islam and pious observance were significant means for the sultans to show their entitlement to government.²⁰⁰ Likewise, performing as the spokesman for the sultan, Sâfi explains the construction of such an expensive mosque with the religiosity of his sultan. He legitimizes the construction by quoting a verse from Qur'an; "The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day."²⁰¹

Therefore, Ahmed was showing his religiosity at every opportunity to legitimize his project. According to Sâfi Efendi's account, the sultan wanted the Friday sermon to be delivered in his Mosque on 5 November 1610 when the construction was still continuing.²⁰² Such occasions could be effectively used for presenting a positive image as members of the court, high-ranking *ulema* and other subjects of the sultan were present during the sermon.

Sâfi continues his account by explaining how Ahmed I was a generous and just ruler having a good moral character. Upon the order of the generous sultan, very rich tables were prepared for the attendants to feast on this special occasion. According to Sâfi, such a sumptuous feast had never been evident in the times of previous sultans. Sâfi Efendi did not forget to praise the sultan for his moral character either. As the inheritor of the crown of Sultan Süleyman, Ahmed did not permit the spread of the

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁹⁹ Christine Woodhead, "Perspective on Süleyman" in *Süleyman The Magnificent and His Age: The Ottoman Empire in The Early Modern World*, eds. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 164-190, at p. 167.

²⁰⁰ Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought from the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2001), p. 271.

²⁰¹ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 47; Qur'an, 9:18, retrieved from *The Holy Qur'an* (www.quran.com).

²⁰² Ibid., pp. 104-109.

offenses of troublemakers towards his subjects. He provided his soldiers with necessary ammunitions to fight such wrongdoers. As a just and decent sultan, he behaved with generosity towards his soldiers.²⁰³ It seems that Sâfi tries to legitimize such showy feasts that the sultan was very eager to organize because the *ulema* did not see his mosque as a legitimate project because it was not constructed with the booties of a major military victory. Gülru Necipoğlu relates that during the second foundation ceremony on 4 January 1609, the grand mufti, the *ulema* and sheikhs consecrated the building with prayers, but they urged the sultan to undertake the conquest of Crete so as to provide legal revenues for his mosque in the manner of Sultan Süleyman.²⁰⁴

After this great feast, Şeyh Mahmud Hüdayi delivered the Friday sermon, and the sultan gave a sable fur to Şeyh Mahmud Efendi as a sign of his respect for şeyhs and hence his piety. These strategies to demonstrate his piety and promote his religious qualities were effective in legitimizing his actions. Karateke's account is worth quoting at length to explain my point in a clear way;

“The sultan's procession to the mosque for Friday prayers was an established ritual in Islamic polities. Still, like other public attestations to the religious way of life practiced in the palace, such an act can be regarded as so much propaganda. Other examples are the *bed-i besmele* ceremonies that took place when Ottoman princes began reading the Qur'an and the *khatim* ceremonies held when they finished; the recitations of the *mevlid*, a ritual commemorating the anniversary of the Prophet's birth, usually celebrated at the Sultan Ahmed Mosque; the visit to the Mantle of the Prophet on the 15th of Ramadan. These and other public rituals all suggest close and conscious attention to the religious theatrics of sovereignty.”²⁰⁵

The architectural design of the mosque followed the examples of the mosques built by Sultan Süleyman. Nebahat Avcıoğlu notes that Ahmed's mosque was a tribute to the artistic canons created by Süleyman and his architect Sinan. Its design lent itself

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan*, p. 516.

²⁰⁵ Hakan Karateke, “Opium For The Subjects? Religiosity As A Legitimizing Factor For The Ottoman Sultan” in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, eds. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurius Reinkowski, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 111-129, at p. 118. (İn'den önce tırnak içinde virgül olmamalı)

to a series of analogies with the mosques of Süleymâniye and Şehzâde.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, the mosque was part of an imperial program implying that the golden age, which was the reign of Süleyman for Ahmed I, was recovered. As Woodhead states, the word “recovery” is important. It gives clues about the nature of the Ottoman outlook that what is important for a powerful ruler is to bring the golden age of the past back rather than creating something new. It is clear that “the Ottoman utopia lay definitely in the past.”²⁰⁷ Ahmed’s emulation of Süleyman was more than a feeling of respect; it was a struggle for identity. Ahmed had a desire to surpass his ancestor by reviving his cultural corpus. Ahmediyye was a way to show the superiority of Ahmed I as the reigning sultan.²⁰⁸ Therefore, Ahmediyye was part of the image-making that Ahmed I and his favorite El-Hac Mustafa sponsored. The sultan was aiming to present a persona that was religious, moral and ambitiously following the right path of Islam.

II.2.2. The Restoration of the Ka‘ba in Mecca

As mentioned above, Ahmed I undertook large-scale architectural projects to present himself as a pious ruler. The restoration of Ka‘ba in Mecca was one of these projects to which the sultan attributed great importance in order to show the depth of his adherence to Islam. Such architectural projects, which would be known to all the subjects, were influential ways to display his religiosity and wealth; also these projects demonstrated that the strength of his empire had reached its peak.

While the construction of the mosque was continuing, Ahmed I ordered the restoration of Ka‘ba upon the exhortation of the retired mufti Sunullah Efendi in 1611. After returning from the pilgrimage, Sunullah warned the sultan that Ka‘ba needed restoration. The pious sultan immediately ordered the restoration to show his care for Islam. Further, he ordered the conduits and the calligraphies of Ka‘ba to be decorated with gold. When the repairers returned to the capital, they were welcomed with an ostentatiously reverent ceremony. The pious sultan paid close attention to the holy relics of Ka‘ba which were rigorously put into their places in the palace treasury.²⁰⁹

Sâfi Efendi’s account contains significant details revealing the motivation behind the restoration. Sâfi Efendi repeatedly refers to the Süleyman-like behavior of

²⁰⁶ Avcioglu, “Ahmed I and The Allegories of Tyranny,” p. 220.

²⁰⁷ Christine Woodhead, “Perspective on Süleyman,” p. 185.

²⁰⁸ Avcioglu, “Ahmed I and Allegories of Tyranny,” p. 220.

²⁰⁹ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, pp. 223-225.

Ahmed, reminding us of his magnificence and religiosity. According to Sâfi, Ahmed was as great as his great-grandfather in that Ka‘ba was also decorated with pure gold in the time of Sultan Süleyman.²¹⁰ The vigilant historian Sâfi Efendi, I think, purposely emphasized the resemblance of Ahmed I to Sultan Süleyman to remind the reader that Sultan Ahmed was such a replica of his ancestor.

II.2.3. A Warrior Sultan or A Passionate Hunter

Ahmed did not want to be a secluded sultan; rather he wanted to be a warrior emperor leading his armies. For this reason, he announced his desire to go to war for many times.²¹¹ In this sense, he organized hunting trips to cultivate an image of a hunter/warrior sultan who was powerful, dynamic and active.²¹² As Artan observes, such a hunting party “stood out as prominent symbol and manifestation of power.” The similarities between the hardship of war and of hunting enabled the young sultan to present himself as a hunter-warrior sultan exalting his sovereignty.²¹³ As Börekçi observes Ahmed’s mother and regent, Handan Sultan, advised him to act in this way in order to impress the public that he had the capacity to rule this vast empire at such a young age in such difficult times.²¹⁴

Ahmed had a passion for hunting as we know from Mustafa Sâfi who wrote long passages on the sultan’s love for hunting in his *Zübde*. Such hunting expeditions were helping Ahmed present himself as an “assertive sultan” in the image of Sultan Süleyman, who was also a passionate hunter and a warrior sultan. Süleyman’s royal hunting was not only a leisurely elite activity but also a martial activity.²¹⁵ Sultan Süleyman used to organize hunting parties in Edirne before or after going on a military campaign.²¹⁶ Ahmed I followed in the footsteps of Sultan Süleyman and organized

²¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 208-209.

²¹¹ Börekçi, “İnkırâzın Eşiğinde Bir Hanedan,” pp. 88-92.

²¹² Melis Taner, “Power to Kill: A Discourse of the Royal Hunt During the Reigns of Süleyman the Magnificent and Ahmed I,” unpublished M.A. thesis, Sabancı University, 2009, pp. 42-63; Tülay Artan, “A Book of Kings Produced and Presented as a Treatise on Hunting,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008), pp. 299-330.

²¹³ Tülay Artan, “Ahmed I’s Hunting Parties: Feasting in Adversity, Enhancing the Ordinary,” *Princeton Papers Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26 (2011), pp. 93-138, at pp. 93-94.

²¹⁴ Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” p. 108.

²¹⁵ Taner, “Power to Kill,” p. 5.

²¹⁶ Şenol Çelik, “Osmanlı Av Geleneğinde Edirne’nin Yeri ve Edirne Kazasındaki Av Alanları (Hassa Şikâr-gâh)” in *XIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi Ankara 4-8 Ekim 1999: Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler, III. Cilt III. Kısım* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002), pp. 1886-1903, at pp. 1890-1891.

hunting trips to Edirne accompanied by military processions in 1612 and 1614. Also, the sultan hunted in areas near İstanbul.

In 1612, for example, Ahmed I arranged extravagant events for his departure for Edirne. These auspicious events, displays of power and wealth, were designed for an audience that could help Sultan Ahmed cultivate the powerful image of himself that he had wanted to project. El-Hac Mustafa Agha, who was the most active actor helping the sultan in this image-making process, left the capital before Sultan Ahmed and made necessary preparations in Edirne. Together with El-Hac Mustafa Agha, the high-ranking members of the court and the *ulema* corps accompanied the sultan during the trip to Edirne. Grand Vizier Nasuh Pasha, *Şeyhülislam* Hocazâde Mehmed Efendi, Hocazâde Esad, and Hocazâde Abdülaziz, who was the chief judge of Rumelia at that time, were among them. Such hunting parties could become suitable environments to establish and reinforce patronage ties. Ahmed visited many places such as Florya, Silivri and Çorlu all the way to Edirne and he organized hunting parties at these places. When they arrived at Edirne, Mustafa Agha, the favorite of Ahmed I, prepared a welcoming ceremony for the sultan and the royal party. When they entered into the palace, he poured gold and silver over their heads so that those who were present reported that they walked on a ground that was covered with gold and silver.²¹⁷ This account was probably told by Sâfi with some exaggeration to show the wealth and power of the sultan.

Ahmed I spent the winter in Edirne, and made several hunting trips around the city. In April 1613, Ahmed I left Edirne for İstanbul, hunting all the way to the capital. Mustafa Sâfi emphasizes that the sultan never forgot to perform his prayers during these hunting parties. Sâfi's emphasis on the sultan's care for the prayer reminds us that he tried to legitimize these extravagant hunting trips by Ahmed's religiosity.²¹⁸ When they reached İstanbul in May 1613, an imperial ceremony was organized. Sultan Ahmed entered into the city as if he were returning from a victorious military campaign.²¹⁹ The ideal of a war-leading sultan continued to live in symbols rather than in action.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, pp. 147-160; Abdülkâdir Efendi, vol. I, pp. 609- 610; Artan, "Ahmed I's Hunting Parties," p. 126, fn. 51.

²¹⁸ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 142

²¹⁹ Artan, "A Book of Kings," p. 304; Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, pp. 204-206.

²²⁰ Colin Imber, "Frozen Legitimacy" in *Legitimizing the Order*, pp. 99-107, at p. 104.

Mustafa Sâfi presents these hunting trips as a proof of Sultan Ahmed's power and justice, which were the pillars of ideal rule. According to Sâfi, the sultan organized such hunting trips not only for entertainment but also to observe the condition of his subjects in the provinces. Also, the hunting trips were intended to strike fear in the hearts of the enemy by appearing near the frontiers.²²¹ The sultan showed that he was personally dealing with the problems of his people as well as the well-being and happiness of his subjects.²²²

Artan observes that as the sultans of the post-Süleymanic period became more sedentary sultans abandoning personal leadership of military campaigns, the Edirne hunting parties of this recent past in the vicinity of Edirne became less frequent. Against the background of that recent past, the aghas of the court seem to have manipulated Ahmed I to conduct such hunting expeditions to create an image for the sultan who was as grand and victorious as his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman.²²³

II.2.4. Auspicious Ceremonies as Signs of Prosperous Times

As is evident in the case of ceremonies conducted to celebrate the construction of the Mosque, Edirne trips, and weddings, Ahmed I liked to conduct auspicious ceremonies at every opportunity, because they served the sultan to display a powerful persona as a "second Süleyman." The exercise of power and its underlying concepts can be read from such ceremonials and other political actions.²²⁴ Ahmed I was advertising the glory and wealth of his empire by such conspicuous consumption because the exhibition of wealth was an indispensable ingredient of a high position in Ottoman society.²²⁵

In 1611, the sultan married his daughter to Nasuh Pasha, who was one of his popular favorites. The sultan sponsored an ornate wedding ceremony for the couple. As

²²¹ Rhoads Murphey, "Mustafa Sâfi's Version of the Kingly Virtues as Presented in His *Zübde'tül Tevarih*, or Annals of Sultan Ahmed, 1012-1023 A.H./1603-1614 A.D.," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies, Volume I: State, Province and the West*, eds. Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki, 2 vols. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), vol. I, pp. 5-24, at p. 10.

²²² Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, pp. 184-185: "Ve sâlisen ahvâl-i memleketi tefehhus ve etvar-ı ecnâs-ı ra'ıyyeti tecessüs olub, aktâr-ı arzda sâkin ve etrâf-ı memâlikde mütemekkin olub, dest-i zulm ü 'udvânile âzürde ve deste-çûb-i zaleme ile let-horde olan re'âyâ vü berâyâyâ ki, pâ-y-ı that-ı Kostantîniyye'de 'ârz-ı ahvâl anlara nisbetile kemâl-i su'ûbet ü işkâl üzredür. İşbu Dâru'n-nasr Edreneye gelüp her gün taşraları teşrif etmek ile..."

²²³ Artan, "A Book of Kings," p. 322.

²²⁴ Aziz Al-Azmah, *Muslim Kingship Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Politics* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), p. 83.

²²⁵ Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, p. XI

Sâfi Efendi reports, everyone living in the capital was invited for this special event. The high-ranking *ulema*, viziers and janissaries were present and they were treated with respect and honor. Very rich tables were prepared for the attendants.²²⁶ As Günhan Börekçi notes, “such special events were observed by the general public as if they were festivals marking the ends of wars and the beginning of prosperous days.”²²⁷

II.2.5. Ahmed’s Patronage of Manuscripts

As part of his endeavor to bring the golden age of Süleyman back, Ahmed I tried to revive the literary corpus of the period of his great grandfather.²²⁸ For instance, Kınalızâde’s *Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî* was copied in 1610/1611, the years that witnessed a very lively literary environment.²²⁹ That coincided with the period when similar books on ethics were produced for Ahmed I such as *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, *Gül-i Sadberg* (*The Rose with a Hundred Leaves*), *Mir‘âtü’l-Ahlâk* (*The Mirrors of Morality*), and *Gül-i Handân* (*The Rose of Handân*). As in the case of commissioning architectural works, there was an ideological significance behind Ahmed I’s insistence on the production of such books on ethics. They were serving the aim of exalting Ahmed I’s kingly virtues and creating a sultanic image that was law-abiding, just, pious, generous and brave.

Ahmed gave importance to commissioning of books on ethics, and he—as being the biggest patron of all arts—patronized gifted people to write and translate important works in his own behalf.²³⁰ Also, Ahmed’s several courtiers performed as patronage brokers for the sultan, and they commissioned the books that were suitable to their sultan’s literary tastes. Ahmed supported writers from various backgrounds; a strong member of *ulema*, a Sufi sheikh or a preacher could be among those writers.

The sultan wanted to hold all the power in his own hands; hence he issued an imperial edict to reform the *ilmiye* and to renovate the allocation of promotions of the

²²⁶ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, pp.135-136; Also for an account of another imperial wedding ceremony see Abdülkâdir Efendi, vol. I, pp. 595-599.

²²⁷ Börekçi, *Factions and Fvaorites*, p. 240

²²⁸ Avciöğlü, “Allegories of Tyranny,” p. 226 n. 90. Avciöğlü states that Kınalızâde’s *Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî* was translated by Abdülaziz Efendi in 1612. However, The fact that Kınalızâde’s *Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî* is originally written in Ottoman Turkish creates a confusion.

²²⁹ Fethi Ethem Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Türkçe Yazmalar Kataloğu*, 2 vols. (İstanbul: Küçükaydın Matbaası, 1961), vol. I, p. 494. Fethi Ethem Karatay gives the information that *Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî* was copied in 1610/1611 under Ahmed’s reign. This information can be an example of the revival that Avciöğlü notes.

²³⁰ For a discussion on the illustrated manuscripts that were patronized by Ahmed I, see Emine Fetvacı, “Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2005, pp. 306-323.

members of the *ulema* corps.²³¹ On the one hand, Sultan Ahmed was effectively using such patronage networks to fill offices. As in the case of Mustafa Sâfi, those who played the right card would be promoted to one of the high-ranking offices in the court. On the other hand, he ordered the high-ranking *ulema* to grant offices to the deserving. Further he ordered that no one was to be appointed solely by intercession and without any examination. This reform decree was dated to the period around 1610 when there was a very lively environment considering promotions. As we will see later in this chapter, there were complex networks of patronage allowing people to find patrons and to gain posts. Also, such an environment helped patrons to widen their web of alliances and to promote their clients to important offices. It seems that Ahmed I tried to organize such networks for the benefit of his rule.

To be able to fully understand the reasons behind the commissioning of arts, architecture, books or auspicious ceremonies, and to see the connection between the physical and the symbolic, the historian must have an insight into the social and ceremonial activities and scrutinize the ideological purposes behind them.²³² In this part, I have scrutinized the reasons behind social, cultural and ceremonial activities conducted by Ahmed I who had the desire to become a “second Süleyman.”

II.3. Patronage Networks in the Court

In order to uncover the role of El-Hac Mustafa as a strong figure in the court of Ahmed I, the centrality of favorites in the politics of the court should be understood. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the sultans preferred to be secluded from the public view; hence, only the favorites of the sultan had access to the secluded sultan. The sultan’s preference to stay at the palace situated the court personnel at the very center of power politics. The sultan began to rely more on his favorites for an efficient rule. Those who wanted to have a powerful place in this game of politics had to be proximate to the person of the sultan. This situation was turning the court into an arena in which the factions and favorites became determining factors for the political environment of the capital.

²³¹ BOA, A.DVN, Dosya: 21, no. 24 (dated 25 Z 1018 / 21 March 1610). I am grateful to Dr. Günhan Börekçi for kindly sharing this archival source with me.

²³² Howard Crane, Review of Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116/2 (1996), pp. 327-28.

In such a court setting, palace eunuchs became important players in political affairs because their duties in the palace put them physically close to the person of the sultan. They also acted as the gate keepers of the palace, so they could control all the information that reached the sultan. In essence, they became very influential figures in the imperial affairs. They also took active part in commissioning of books.²³³ Such court favorites created by the sultans were indispensable agents of power. *Babüssa'âde ağası* (the chief eunuch of the palace) and *Darıssa'âde ağası* (the chief eunuch of the imperial harem) were important examples of such aghas.

Ahmed I did not present a secluded character but his reign did not differ from its earlier counterparts in creating and relying on palace favorites to strengthen his personal rule. As Börekçi observes, Ahmed I's royal favorites were very critical figures in establishing and improving his personal rule in the faction-ridden court. They also acted as power brokers, helping the sultan model himself after Sultan Süleyman.²³⁴ El-Hac Mustafa Agha who was one of the most important players in the political arena backing the sultan.

El-Hac Mustafa was the chief eunuch of the imperial harem during the reign of Ahmed I.²³⁵ He became the most powerful favorite in the court of Ahmed I after the death of Handan Sultan who played a critical role in the political arena as a powerful regent in the early years of her son's reign. Mustafa Agha filled the power vacuum that the queen mother Handan Sultan's death in 1605 left. He took control of the affairs of the imperial harem and became even more powerful.²³⁶ As we will see, he worked hard to advertise a powerful sultanic image for Ahmed emulating that of Sultan Süleyman that was examined in the first part of this chapter.

II.3.1. The Patronage of El-Hac Mustafa and His Relationship with Hocaşâde Abdülaziz Efendi

As Jane Hathaway points out, black eunuch aghas became highly prominent figures in the political arena from the late sixteenth century onwards as harem politics

²³³ Zeren Tanındı, "Bibliophile Aghas (Eunuchs) at Topkapı Saray," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004), pp. 333-343, at p.333.

²³⁴ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p.198.

²³⁵ Harem was the private quarter of the sultan's family where the queen mother, the sultan's sisters, concubines, and daughters resided. Topkapı Palace housed the imperial harem over which the chief eunuch presided." quoted from Jane Hathaway, "Eunuch Households in İstanbul, Medina, and Cairo during the Ottoman Era," *Turcica* 41 (2010), pp. 291-303, at p. 291.

²³⁶ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 138.

began to flourish. The influence of the chief eunuch increased by the seventeenth century; he even began to rival the grand vizier for the control of political affairs.²³⁷ In such a setting, the chief eunuch Mustafa Agha appeared as a strong figure in court politics and manuscript patronage during the reign of Ahmed I. Tülün Değirmenci asserts that the new nature of the court in which the sultan relied on favorites for an efficient rule was also transforming the identity of the courtiers who could demand illustrated manuscripts that were central to the arts produced in the palace.²³⁸ Hence, El-Hac Mustafa's role as the patronage broker makes him significant for the arguments of this study.

We know that Mustafa Agha was present at the court of Mehmed III. According to Sâfi Efendi's account, he was sent to Egypt in 1602: a year before Ahmed's accession to the throne. We do not have enough information about the position of Mustafa Agha in the court of Mehmed III, but we can infer that Ahmed and Mustafa Agha were already acquainted before Ahmed's accession to the throne. Moreover, the Hocazâdes must have known Mustafa Agha earlier, as their father Hoca Sadeddin was a powerful figure during the reign of Mehmed III. Mustafa Agha was called back to İstanbul after Cevher Agha's exile to Egypt in 1604. Ahmed I appointed him as the chief eunuch of the imperial harem one year later. Sâfi does not explain the reasons of this situation, but it is a reminder that Mustafa Agha most probably had to work to recreate a network for himself, as he was away from the center of power during his exile.²³⁹

It is not certain in the contemporary chronicles, such as Sâfi's *Zübde*, how Mustafa Agha rose to prominence in the court of Ahmed I. However, it is certain that Handan Sultan's death in 1605 was a turning point for El-Hac Mustafa's career. Mustafa was appointed as the chief eunuch of the imperial Harem on 5 November 1605 just before Handan Sultan's death.²⁴⁰ He became the highest authority in the harem, and

²³⁷ Jane Hathaway, "The Role of the Kızlar Ağası in 17th-18th Century Ottoman Egypt," *Studia Islamica* 75 (1992), pp. 141-58, at p. 141.

²³⁸ Tülün Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları ve Resmedilen Kitaplar: II. Osman Devrinde Değişen Güç Simgeleri* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2012), p. 61.

²³⁹ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, pp.80-81; Jane Hathaway, "The Role of the Kızlar Ağası in 17th-18th Century Ottoman Egypt," p. 142. Hathaway notes that the practice of exiling Darüssaade Aghası was peculiarly an Ottoman institution aiming to keep powerful Aghas away from the center of power. Also, for a brief information on Darüssaade Agha, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Saray Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1945).

²⁴⁰ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Nuhbe*, p. 645; Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 81.

he probably managed to use the absence of such a powerful figure as like the queen mother in the court to strengthen his position. He was in the immediate circle of the sultan as the chief eunuch holding the gates of the imperial harem. Mustafa Agha probably was clever enough to use this proximity for his benefit in the complex political environment of the court. He was able to become the most intimate favorite of the sultan.

Mustafa Agha most probably had great influence on the young and inexperienced sultan. Peçevî wrote in his account that Mustafa Agha was given the responsibility for all affairs of state during the reign of Ahmed I.²⁴¹ After the death of Handan Sultan in 1605 period, he served Ahmed I as the main power broker.²⁴² He helped the sultan to promote a powerful sultanic image mirroring that of Sultan Süleyman. His role as royal favorite protecting the interests of the sultan gave El-Hac Mustafa enormous political power. He did not leave the sultan alone in the business of ruling, but accompanied him as a trusted advisor. Peçevi's account reveals Mustafa Agha's importance in court politics as a trustee and helps us to understand the influence of Mustafa Agha on Ahmed I.

Mustafa Agha was entrusted by Sultan Ahmed with some very special tasks. One of those tasks was to carry out the business related to the construction of the imperial mosque. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Sultan Ahmed's not having a major victory over an enemy subjected the construction of the mosque to criticism. El-Hac Mustafa vigorously resisted the criticisms and worked to legitimize the construction. As mentioned earlier, he was very visible in every occasion, backing his sultan and legitimizing his actions.

Mustafa Agha was also clever enough to build a web of clients to secure his position in the faction-ridden court. He managed to strengthen his position in the court by using his power to distribute patronage. Kalender Pasha, for instance, was one of the most important protégés of the Mustafa Agha.²⁴³ Tülün Değirmenci notes that the first known example of Mustafa Agha's patronage relationship for manuscript production was with Kalender Pasha.²⁴⁴ Understanding Mustafa Agha's patronage of Kalender will

²⁴¹ Peçevî, vol. II, p. 337. Fetvacı also used this account in the same way.

²⁴² Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 138

²⁴³ For a discussion of Kalender Paşa and the so-called Ahmed I Album, see Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," pp.306-323.

²⁴⁴ Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları ve Resmedilen Kitaplar*, p. 73.

help us to understand the nature of possible patronage relations between Mustafa and Hocazâde Abdülaziz.

Unveiling the network of relations that Kalender was involved in, Mehmed b. Mehmed wrote about Kalender's close relationship with the eunuchs of the imperial harem. It seems that Kalender was already aware of the importance of building relations with harem eunuchs to be able to have better posts. Mehmed b. Mehmed gave particular attention to the relationship between Kalender and El-Hac Mustafa. According to Mehmed b. Mehmed, Kalender's appointment, first as the deputy finance director (*defterdâr-ı şikk-ı sâni*) and then as the building supervisor (*binâ emîni*) of the Ahmediyye Mosque was thanks to the intermediation of Mustafa Agha.²⁴⁵ Mustafa Agha wanted his protégé to be appointed as building supervisor of the mosque; however, Ahmed stipulated certain conditions for his appointment. He asked Kalender to compose an album of calligraphy to see if he was skillful enough to supervise the construction. Kalender prepared the album upon the request of Ahmed I and he was appointed to the post. In 1614, Kalender was promoted to the vizierate in return for his services.²⁴⁶ The case of Kalender reveals Mustafa Agha's role as patronage broker and his influence on appointments not only for the mosque but also for other important positions. Kalender was not the only person sponsored by El-Hac Mustafa. Baki Tezcan states that he "sponsored the careers of such men as the future grand viziers Tabaniyassı Mehmed Pasha, the vizier and finance minister Hasan Pasha, and two other viziers, Sarrac Hasan Pasha and Hamidi Mustafa Pasha."²⁴⁷

El-Hac Mustafa's role as a powerful patron gives reasonable ground to conclude that he had such a patronage relation with Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi. They worked for the formation of a new powerful sultanic image for Ahmed I. They shared the intellectual concerns that were predominant in the court of Sultan Ahmed. Therefore, they were involved in the production of books of advice, promoting Ahmed as a pious, just, brave and powerful ruler.

Tülün Değirmenci notes that El-Hac Mustafa's interest in illustrated manuscripts began in the period after 1609 when the political power of the sultan was highest.²⁴⁸ I

²⁴⁵ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p.91: "Müstakîm ve ihtiyâr ve ırzıyla mukayyed bir eyü âdemdür' deyü taraf-ı saltanata arz ve sevk idüp, ol binâ-i azîme buni emîn ve hâfiz-ı mâl ta'yin itdirmişidiler."

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Tezcan, "Searching for Osman," p. 158.

²⁴⁸ Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları ve Resmedilen Kitaplar*, p. 78.

further assert that his interest was not only in illustrated manuscripts but also books on ethics, as we know that he sponsored the production of three important books on ethics for Ahmed I. Three books were *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî (Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî) Gül-i Sadberg*, and *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde* that were translated by Hocazâde Abdülaziz from Persian into Turkish. Abdülaziz wrote in the preface of his books *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde* and *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* that he made these translations thanks to the intermediation of El-Hac Mustafa.²⁴⁹ El-Hac Mustafa commissioned the production of such important books which were very suitable for the sultan's individual taste.

Moreover, Abdülaziz wrote in *Gül-i Sadberg*, which was sent to Abdülaziz for translation along with *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*,²⁵⁰ that he translated this piece into Ottoman Turkish at the request of the sultan. He wrote that “the sultan had sent me this blessed pearl to translate it on his behalf.”²⁵¹ Abdülaziz Efendi's testament suggests that the person who brought “the pearl” was probably El-Hac Mustafa Agha, because he was the chief patronage broker of Ahmed I.

These accounts enable us to think that Hocazâde Abdülaziz and Mustafa Agha came together in their interest in manuscript production. Having an enthusiasm to create an image of a powerful, just, generous and religious emperor, Ahmed probably liked to read such books on ethics. Mustafa Agha would enhance this image to be able to secure his position as the favorite of the sultan, hence he probably give prominence to production of such books on ethics to attract the favor of the sultan. El-Hac Mustafa's ability to sponsor books shows the level of power he gained. His visibility as a patron proves his proximity to the sultan as a favorite and powerful patronage broker seeking talents to serve his sultan's tastes.

Abdülaziz Efendi began to translate the book when he was dismissed from the chief judgeship of Rumelia in 1610. He gained his position back after finishing the translation in 1612. We do not know whether Mustafa Agha was influential in the reappointment of Abdülaziz upon finishing his translation; however, Abdülaziz Efendi

²⁴⁹ Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Tercüme-i Miftâhü's-Sa'âde*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 2335, fols. 14a-14b; *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Nuruosmaniye fol. 15b.

²⁵⁰ Abdülaziz added a tentative translation of *Gül-i Sadberg* at the end of his *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* between fols. 275b-276b. This situation gives a reasonable ground to conclude that Ahmed requested the translation of these two works and sent them to Abdülaziz Efendi at the same time.

²⁵¹ Ceyhan, *Hazret-i Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*, p. 146; Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Gül-i Sadberg*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Denizli 416, fol. 3a (hereafter Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Gül-i Sadberg*): “*Bana ol dürr-i pâki itdi irsâl/ Mu'ammer eylesün Hakk anı sad-sâl/ Bu vech üzere zuhûr itdi hitâbı/ Ki anun ismine yazam bu kitâbı.*”

did not forget to praise El-Hac Mustafa for his good character, reliability and religiosity in the preface of his book.²⁵²

Mustafa Agha was not a producer of books; people like Hocazâde Abdülaziz, Hocazâde Esad, or Mustafa Sâfi formed the intellectual environment in the court of Ahmed I. Mustafa Agha sponsored a number of works to be translated from Persian into Turkish. The patronage of such books probably allowed Mustafa Agha to take part in the literary circles and to establish himself as a literary patron, strengthening his position among the elites of the court.²⁵³ Having the ability and power to produce books reflects his presence in the elite culture. This cooperation served Abdülaziz's interests as well, for thus he had a powerful ally who had a great influence on the sultan.

As a final note, it is hard to explain whether El-Hac Mustafa Agha had a relationship with other Hocazâdelis, namely Hocazâde Mehmed and Hocazâde Esad Efendis, who held important *ilmiye* positions and were powerful political players. The dispute between Mustafa Agha and the chief mufti Hocazâde Mehmed over the construction of Sultan Ahmed Mosque shows that Mustafa Agha had enough power to challenge the authority of the chief mufti. However, Mustafa Agha most probably counted the possible negative outcomes of contesting such influential people who had many adherents. Therefore, the fact that he build a patronage relation with Hocazâde Abdülaziz can be interpreted as his willingness to have good relations with such an *ulema* family.

The appointment of Seyyid Kasım Gubârî (d. 1625) who was the protégé of the chief mufti Hocazâde Mehmed Efendi²⁵⁴ for writing the calligraphies of the mosque could be an indication of the relation between the Hocazâde brothers and Mustafa Agha. As mentioned earlier, Mustafa Agha was responsible for conducting all of the business related to the construction of the Mosque. Therefore, the selection of Gubârî for this business must have been subject to Mustafa Agha's approval. Hence, we can think that

²⁵² *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/ Nuruosmaniye, fol. 15b

²⁵³ A similar interpretation had been made by Emine Fetvacı on the patronage of Gazanfer Agha, see Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," pp. 257-266.

²⁵⁴ Mehmed b. Mehmed, *Târîh*, p. 136. Gubârî gained his teaching license from Hoca Sadeddin. The members of Hocazâde family supervised gifted people and they widened their network by gaining adherents among talented people. Gubârî had a special ability that he wrote a verse from Qur'an on rice and presented it to Hoca Sadeddin. Sadeddin Efendi was very influenced by this special ability, included Gubârî among his network. After Sadeddin's death, Gubârî continued to be in relation with Hocazâde Mehmed Efendi.

Mustafa Agha might enter into agreement with Hocazâde Mehmed because they probably had common personal interest in arts and literature with political motivations.

As part of this study, manuscript production and its relation to patronage networks were scrutinized with the examples of El-Hac Mustafa and Hocazâde Abdülaziz. The intellectual environment was determined by both the subject matter and the form of the manuscripts produced. Who was shaping the intellectual environment; the writer or the patron? What was the role of favorites in shaping the intellectual environment? Ahmed created many favorites such as El-Hac Mustafa Agha and Hafiz Ahmed Pasha; they were influential figures in manuscript production as we know from many manuscripts whose prefaces declare that they were written thanks to the request of such favorites. They had an increasingly visible power in the court and certain literary tastes and interests as patrons. Although the interest of patrons was a determining factor for the books promoted, the most important factor for production of a book was probably the sultan's tastes and interests. To be able to present a book to the sultan and to gain prominence in return, it would have to cater to his literary tastes. In this respect, I have tried to portray El-Hac Mustafa Agha as a power and patronage broker for Ahmed in creating an image as powerful as that of Süleyman I, whose reign was the "golden age" for Ahmed I. Also, we have seen the relation between El-Hac Mustafa Agha and Hocazâde Abdülaziz in terms of their interest in producing books of advice.

II.4. Manuscript Patronage: The Books on Ethics Presented to Ahmed I

I will examine the books on ethics personally commissioned by Ahmed I, as well as those commissioned by his courtiers on his behalf. Overall, such a study of the books presented to Ahmed I will serve to better reveal the ideological functions lying behind the production of these manuscripts. When we scrutinize the books written for Ahmed I, we can easily conclude that Ahmed was really interested in reading books on ethics because of the large number of books of advice written upon his own request. I believe that such books served the sultan to present his kingly virtues and to solidify his image as a religious, just, law-abiding ruler.

One of the earlier examples of ethical advice books translated for Ahmed I was Muhammed Âsafî's "*The Story of Celâl u Cemâl*" by Mustafa Sâfi around 1607.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ The following information on Mustafa Sâfi Efendi's *Celâl u Cemâl* comes from Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," pp. 102-106; Mustafa Sâfi, *Tercüme-i Celâl u Cemâl*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Hamidiye 1068 (hereafter Sâfi, *Celâl u Cemâl*); *DİA*, s.v. "Sâfi Mustafa Efendi," by Bekir Kütükoğlu;

Âsafî was a distinguished poet who lived in the period of Sultan Hüseyin Baykara. Sultan Baykara's court was a lively environment. Sultan Baykara housed celebrated writers, poets, calligraphers and painters in his court; Hüseyin Vâiz Kâşifî (d. 1505) who wrote *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*, Devlet Şah who wrote a *Tezkire-i Şuarâ*, poets Câmî (d. 1492), Âsafî (d. 1510) and 'Alî Şîr Nevâyî (d. 1501).²⁵⁶ The commission of *Celâl u Cemâl* by the sultan proves that Ahmed I had a particular interest in the books produced at the Timurid court, as we know that he also commissioned the translation of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*, which was also produced at the court of Hüseyin Baykara. Mustafa Sâfî wrote in the preface of his book about Ahmed's interest in reading books on the lives of past rulers in order to learn lessons about how to become a just ruler.²⁵⁷ Whether Ahmed was extracting lessons from such books or it was part of an image-making project that we mentioned before, we know that Sultan Ahmed liked to read on the lives of past kings, especially on the reign of his great-grandfather Süleyman. Nebahat Avcioğlu writes that "Ahmed promised his people an empire more flourishing than ever before by 'imitating the virtues of his predecessor Süleyman.'" ²⁵⁸

In the preface of the book, Mustafa Sâfî gives clues about selection of the books for translation. According to his account, Ahmed I saw several books in the palace library. He scrutinized every book in detail and his advisors summarized the content of the books and explained how those books would be useful.²⁵⁹ *The Story of Celâl u Cemâl* was worth translating into Ottoman Turkish in that it had a very detailed

and Agah Sırrı Levend, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), vol. I, p. 137.

²⁵⁶ Aynî, *Türk Ahlakçıları*, p. 180

²⁵⁷ Mustafa Sâfî, *Celâl u Cemâl*, fol. 2b: "Çün pâdişâh-ı cihân ve sultân-ı zemîn ü zemân ... hazretinün tab'-ı pâki ve kalb-i mücellâ vu tâb-nâki ahhâr-ı mülûk-i pişîn ve tevârih-i selâtin-i taht-nîşîn tetebbu'ına râgıb ve ol âsâr u ahhâr esnâsında olan envâ'-i hikmet ve esnâf-ı pend ü nasîhate tâlib olub kavâ'id-i adl u dâda mâ'il ve fevâ'id-i fazl ve ihsânü'l-'ibâde vâsıl olmağla bu ma'nâyı müştemil olan kütüb-i nefiseye mutâla'ası zât-ı 'âlîlerine 'âdet ve her kıssadan bir hassa ve her sûret-i hikâyetden 'ibret ahz itmek huzûr-ı 'âlîlerinde 'ayn-ı sa'âdetdür." Quoted by Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 103, fn. 61.

²⁵⁸ Avcioğlu uses Thomas Artus who brought the history of Chalkokondyles up to date see Chalkokondyles, *L'histoire de la decadence de l'empire grec*, vol 2 (Paris, 1620); Avcioğlu, "Ahmed I and The Allegories of Tyranny," p. 225.

²⁵⁹ Sâfî, *Celâl u Cemâl*, fol. 2b: "Taht-ı zîr nigârlarına hıvâne-i kütüb ü pür i'tibârdan nice kitâb-ı nefis ü yâdkâr getirülüb tab'-ı şerîf ve hâtır-ı münîf ... leri her kangısına meyl ü teveccüh buyurur ise mutâla'a ve anda olan fâ'ide ahhârî ... ve ahvâl-i revz u kârî mukâşefe..." Quoted by Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p.102-103.

structure written for a very prominent Timurid sultan. Also, it gave details about the virtues of kingship and contained stories sermonizing good advice.²⁶⁰

Mustafa Sâfi was chosen to translate the story thanks to Hafız Ahmed Pasha who was recently appointed to the vizierate.²⁶¹ This translation task was a key to gain favor for Sâfi, so he would be promoted to prominent positions. Sâfi wrote in the epilogue of *Celâl u Cemâl* about his desire to be employed in the court. Mustafa Sâfi became very successful in his duty, such that Ahmed appointed him as his personal preacher.²⁶² This incident gives clues about how manuscript patronage functioned in the court of Ahmed I. As a young dynamic sultan, Ahmed's eagerness to read a variety of books and extract lessons from them served those people who wanted to gain prominence and prestige like Mustafa Sâfi.

Sâfi managed to show his literary abilities by his translation and gained the favor of Ahmed I. In 1609, through the intermediation of Hafız Ahmed Pasha and upon the direct order of the sultan, he began to write a history of Ahmed's reign: *Zübdetü't-Tevârih (The Quintessence of Histories)*.²⁶³ The first volume of *Zübde* mainly talks about the virtues of Sultan Ahmed I; he exemplified Ahmed I's qualities as the ideal virtuous king, resembling to what he did in *Celâl u Cemâl*. Rhoads Murphey likens the first volume of *Zübde* to *Nasihatü'l-Mülük (Counsel for the Sultans)* of Gazâlî and *Siyasetnâme* of Nizamü'l-Mülk and notes that *Zübde* fits better with that tradition than with any pre-existing form of Ottoman historical writing.²⁶⁴ Therefore, it is proper to count the first volume of *Zübde* among the books on ethics that were written for Ahmed I. In *Zübde*, Sâfi portrayed Ahmed I as a virtuous ruler, meaning a pious, generous, just and warrior sultan who had the high moral values, intellectual capacity and physical strength ascribed to the figure of the ideal sultan.²⁶⁵ Sâfi, performing as the defender of his sultan, legitimized his actions. According to his account, "sultanic generosity

²⁶⁰ Ibid., fol. 3a: "Huzûr u sa'âdetlerine bir gün kütüb ma'hûdeden bir nice kitâb-ı müstetâb geliip manzûr u nazra kesîr eserleri oldu, içlerinde Celâl u Cemâl nâm nüsha ki onu Semerkand Hânı olan Mirza Şahruh zamanında melîkû'ş-şu'arâ olan Mevlânâ Âsâfi nazm-ı belîğ ile te'lîf ve lafz-ı fasîh ve nekât-ı acîbe ve hikâyât-ı garîbe ile tarsîf eylemişdir... kitâb-ı mezkûr hadd-i zâtında bir kitâb-ı latîf olup nice kıssa-i pür amber ve nasihat-i mu'teberi muntazım olmağla" Quoted by Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 103.

²⁶¹ Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 103.

²⁶² Kütükoğlu, "Sâfi Mustafa Efendi," p.472.

²⁶³ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, p. 114.

²⁶⁴ Murphey, "Mustafa Sâfi's Version of the Kingly Virtues," p. 5.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

formed a basic source of the state's well-being and a principal cause of the dynasty's preservation."²⁶⁶

Mustafa Sâfi also was charged to translate another important book, *El İsti'âb fî Ma'rifeti'l-Ashâb* (*The Collection of the Erudite Companions of the Prophet*).²⁶⁷ This book was written by Abdülber b. Ömer Yusuf b. Abdullah (d. 1070). It is a biographical book, including the life stories of Prophet Muhammed's companions. Mustafa Sâfi could not complete the translation, as he died in 1616. Taşköprülüzâde Kemaleddin Mehmed continued it but he also could not complete it, because of Ahmed's death in 1617. This book is a very detailed manuscript with individual portraits of the Prophet's companions who should be role models for a pious sultan, which Ahmed I was by all accounts.

Another translation commissioned by Ahmed I further illustrates his interest in books on ethics written in the courts of past rulers. *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde fî Kavâidi's-Siyâde* (*The Key of Felicity Concerning the Principles of Virtuousness*) was translated by Hocasâde Abdülaziz in 1616 by the order of the sultan.²⁶⁸ It was originally written in Persian by Muhammed b. Ibrahim b. Muhammed el-Îcî on behalf of Şah Şücâ' (d. 1384), a Muzaffarid ruler of Southern Iran (d. 1389/1390). *Miftâh* can be considered as an example of advice literature. In almost every section, the book talks about the necessary principles to be a virtuous ruler. Probably for this reason Ahmed was interested in its translation. It contains four main parts revealing principles of ideal kingship. The first part is about the real meaning of the throne. The second part covers the duties of prominent persons, favorites of the sultan, judges and governors who should conduct their work justly. The third part is about the morals that viziers, persons of prominence and favorites must have. The fourth part contains stories and verses on wisdom.

Gül-i Sadberg was also translated by Hocasâde Abdülaziz for Ahmed I.²⁶⁹ It is a translation of Reşidüddîn Vatvat's (d. 1182) book which was written in Persian; *Matlûb-u Külli Tâlib min Kelâmi Emîrû'l-Mü'minîn 'Alî b. Ebî Tâlib*. It contains the hundred sayings of Prophet Muhammed's disciple Ali. Reşidüddîn Vatvât translated

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁶⁷ *El İsti'âb fî Ma'rifeti'l-Ashâb*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Nuruosmaniye 723; Agah Sırrı Levend, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, p. 205.

²⁶⁸ Abdülaziz Efendi, *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde*, fol. 13a; Ceyhan, *Hazreti Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*, p. 76; Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, 3 vols. (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1342), vol. III, p. 67

²⁶⁹ The following information on *Gül-i Sadberg* comes from Adem Ceyhan, see Ceyhan, *Hazret-i Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*, pp. 79-189.

Ali's hundred sayings into Persian and he added explanations. He presented his book first to Harizmşah Atsız (1128-1152) who was the founder of Kharizmian Dynasty and then to Ebu'l-Kâsım Mahmud b. İl Arslan (d. 1193).²⁷⁰ Abdülaziz Efendi translated this piece into Ottoman Turkish by Sultan Ahmed's order. Abdülaziz also praised Ahmed I for being a just sultan who earned a reputation for his generosity, good character and morality. According to the translator, Ahmed I was very ambitious to spread knowledge, therefore many books were produced on his behalf. Abdülaziz said that these hundred sayings of Ali organize the right way, they are the case of the reserves of the truth. If one were to live according to these sayings, one would reach the goal (of virtuousness).²⁷¹ Apparently, this book was aiming to give counsel to show "the right way of Islam."

Like his brother Abdülaziz, Hocasâde Esad also took part in the literary circles. He translated Sa'di Şirâzî's (d. 1292) *Gülistân* from Persian into Turkish. Sa'di wrote his piece in a very elaborate style for Ebu Bekir b. Sa'd b. Zengî in 1258. In the reign of this prominent Salghurid governor (1231-1260), Shiraz became a center for art and literature. Sa'di's *Gülistân* was a book on ethics. Sa'di's aim in writing such a book was to be beneficial not only for rulers but also for common people, in that the book includes stories from daily life that provide moral lessons. The book is composed of eight parts on the nature of sultans, the morals of dervishes, the grace of contention, the advantage of being silent when necessary, love and youth, weakness of old age, the impression of good behavior and the rules of conversation.²⁷² Esad translated this book for Ahmed I and he named his book *Gül-i Handân* (*The Rose of the Gracious*). The book was probably named after Ahmed's mother, Handan. In the preface of the book, Esad emphasized the good character of Ahmed I who was law abiding, pious and decent, implying Ahmed I already had the good image that was mentioned in the book. According to Esad, Ahmed was very enthusiastic to spread the knowledge (*ilm*), hence many important pieces were written in the name of the sultan.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Kâtip Çelebi, *Keşfü'z-Zunûn An Esâmi'l-Kütübi ve'l-Fünûn*, ed. Rüşdü Balcı, 5 vols. (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2007), vol. I, p. 187.

²⁷¹ Ceyhan, *Hazreti Ali'nin Yüz Sözü*, p. 145; Hocasâde Abdülaziz Efendi, *Gül-i Sadberg*, fol. 2b.

²⁷² Şirazlı Şeyh Sa'di, *Gül Suyu (Gülistân Tecümesi)*, trans. Niğdeli Hakkı Kadı and eds. Azmi Bilgin and Mustafa Çiçekler (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2000), p. 13-20.; Sa'di, *Gülistân*, trans. Hikmet İlaydın, (İstanbul: M.E.B, 1991); *DİA*, s.v. "Gülistân," by Tahsin Yazıcı.

²⁷³ Hocasâde Esad Efendi, *Gül-i Handân*, fols. 13b-14a: "Ol şehinşâh-ı memâlikînin nâme-i nâm ve ism-i sâmelerine ... mehâmid-i aliyyeleriyle nice zibâ dîbâceler dîbâcî dokunup ve âyât-ı medâyih zât-ı sûtûde

Apart from the books written upon the order of Ahmed I, there were members of Ottoman literati producing such books in the hope of presenting them to the sultan. Ahmed's passion for books created possibilities for gaining prestige. Therefore, many books were produced to gain the favor of the sultan.

Bostanzâde Yahya's *Mir'âtü'l-Ahlâk (The Mirror of Morals)*²⁷⁴ had very similar content to that of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* and *Gül-i Handân*, talking on the characteristics of the ideal sultans. Bostanzâde Yahya was the son of the chief mufti Bostanzâde Mehmed Efendi. Yahya had a career in the *ilmiye*. He served as *müderris* in illustrious medreses of İstanbul and as a judge between 1601 and 1614. He was dismissed from the judgeship of İstanbul in 1614. He completed his book in 1615 when he still did not hold any position. In the preface of the book, Bostanzâde explained that he wrote *Mir'âtü'l-Ahlâk*, a book on ethics, because he was living under the reign of Ahmed I who was known for his respect for the *ulema*, and for righteous and virtuous people.²⁷⁵ We do not know whether Yahya was able to present his book to the sultan, yet it is clear that he wrote his book with an aim to do so as he wrote a long part praising Ahmed I in the preface of his book.

Around the same time as Hocasâde Esad and Bostanzâde Yahya did their translations, Veysî who had a judicial career, wrote his *Hâbnâme (The Book of Dreams)*. It is believed that Veysî presented his work to Ahmed I in 1608. However, Tunç Şen asserts that he presented his book to Nasuh Pasha while he was grand vizier; therefore, the exact date of its presentation must have been between 1611 and 1614.²⁷⁶ It is not certain whether Veysî managed to present his book to Ahmed. However, *Hâbnâme* is important as an example reflecting prevalent concerns of the period.

Hâbnâme can be considered among advice literature in that Veysî gave counsel in the form of a dream setting in which Alexander the Great has a conversation with Ahmed I on state administration. In this setting, Alexander explains how the sultans are the heart of the universe. If the heart deviates from the right path, the body would be

sıfatları leb-i âdabu'l-bâb ile okunup metâc-ı 'ilm ve hünerin revâcına rağbet ve şevkleri ... ile nice kitâb-ı behcet nisâb te'lîf ve nice resâil-i belâgat intisâb tasnîf olunup..."

²⁷⁴ The following information on the content of *Mir'âtü'l-Ahlâk* comes from Nurgül Sucu, see Nurgül Sucu, "Bostanzâde Yahya Efendi ve Mir'âtü'l-Ahlâk'ı," unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Selçuk University, 2010.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁷⁶ Tunç Şen, "The Dream of a 17th century Intellectual Veysî and His Habname," unpublished M.A. thesis, Sabancı University, 2008, pp. 40-41.

injured.²⁷⁷ In response, Ahmed talks about the social and political problems of his time. He says that if his ancestors had left him a more peaceful empire, he would have ruled better with greater justice and equity. Alexander the Great replies that there have always been problems in the world which had never been that rich and prosperous.²⁷⁸ On the one hand, Veysî tries to raise his questions on the ongoing disorders and to find solutions to the problem of the time. On the other hand, he did not go further in his criticisms by having Alexander the Great speak in a tender voice explaining the troubles of previous times. What was the aim of Veysî in situating Alexander the Great side by side with Ahmed I? Did he try to appeal to the sultan by using the example of Alexander the Great who “represented an exemplary sultan figure bearing all the ideal characteristics a king had to have”?²⁷⁹ According to Tunç Şen, Veysî reflected his concern over the political instability of his time and his desire to gain patronage by his *Habnâme*.²⁸⁰

Apart from the members of *ilmiye*, there were a good number of *sufî* preachers writing on political issues in the form of *nasîhatnâme* (advice literature). According to Derin Terzioğlu, it was in the last decades of the sixteenth, and the first three decades of the seventeenth century that the *Sufî meşâyih* truly came into their own as political writers. Terzioğlu relates the involvement of the *meşâyih* the political scene to the crises of the central state during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. There was increasing political social and economic instability as well as intensified conflict between different power groups. It was an era of political and social mobilization in which discontented groups from all levels of society, soldiers, *medrese* students, *sufîs* or members of *ulema* who had been dismissed from office, tried to convey their grievances through petitions, *nasîhatnâme* or in the form of rebellions.²⁸¹ Abdülmecid Sivâsî was one of these influential *sufî* preachers living in the period of Ahmed I. He was involved in the political sphere by conveying his ideas in the form of an advice book.

²⁷⁷ Veysî, *Hâbnâme-i Veysî*, ed. Mustafa Altun (İstanbul: MVT, 2011), p. 45 (hereafter Veysî, *Hâbnâme*): “Giderek cevâhir-i kelâm bu semte isâr olundu ki pâdisâhlar ‘âlemiñ kalbidir kalb ki müstakîmü’l-ahvâl olmayub hadd-i i’tidâlden münharif ola be-her-hâl beden ihtilâl-pezîr olur.”

²⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 46-47: “Ey pâdişâh-ı civân-baht budur ki bî-vefâ dūnya eger benim bildigim dūnya ise, ne bir pâdişâh zamânında ma’mûr u âbâdân olmuşdur, ve ne halk-ı ‘âlem anın şerrinden amân bulmuşdur. Zamânımızda harâbdur dediginiz dūnya ne vakitte ma’mûr u âbâdân idi?”

²⁷⁹ Şen, “The Dream of a 17th century Intellectual,” p. 54.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Derin Terzioğlu, “Sunna Minded Sufi Preachers of the Ottoman State,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010), pp. 241-312, at p. 246.

Abdülmeccid Sivâsî wrote his *Letâifü'l-Ezhâr ve Lezâizü'l-Esmâr*, also known as *Nesâyihü'l-Mülûk* (Advice to Rulers),²⁸² upon the order of Ahmed. This book can be considered as an example of advice literature. Its content was organized in order to give good advice and show the right path for a Muslim to take. Sivâsî talks about the problems of the period and gives recipes to solve those problems. According to Sivâsî, the reason for immoral behaviors is grounded in not having the real belief. To be able to refrain from immoral behaviors, one should keep away from people who perpetrate mischief and should be in the company of righteous people (*ehl-i hak*). According to Sivâsî, the sultan should always act according to the *shari'a* (Islamic law), because he sets an example for his people. If the sultan takes the right path of *shari'a*, the people would follow him. If the sultan wants the state to live long, he must find the people who are righteous, and he must take their advice as they are the mirrors of God's wisdom.²⁸³ Sivâsî completes his book by praying for Ahmed I.²⁸⁴

Kadıızâde Mehmed İlmî was another *sufi* who wrote an advice book, *Nüşhü'l Hükkâm ve Sebeb-i Nizâm* (Advice for the Rulers and the Reason of Order). He presented his book first to Kuyucu Murad Pasha. Murad Pasha loved the book and he wanted Kadıızâde İlmî Efendi to present it to Ahmed I. It seems that Kadıızâde İlmî Efendi wrote this book to give advice for a better rule. He writes in the preface of his book that it is necessary for the sultan to read this book seven times, even seventy times with an open mind, to understand it and act accordingly, because this book is a cure for the armies of Islam to become victorious and for the enemies of the religion and state (*dîn ü devlet*) to become defeated.²⁸⁵

²⁸² Abdülmeccid Sivâsî, *Letâifü'l-Ezhâr ve Lezâizü'l-Esmâr*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Mihrişah Sultan 255, fol. 7b (hereafter Sivâsî, *Letâifü'l-Ezhâr*); Also for the content of the book see Cengiz Gündoğdu, *Bir Türk Mutasavvıfı Abdülmeccid Sivâsî (971/1563-1049/1639): Hayatı Eserleri ve Tasavvufi Görüşleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2000), pp. 215-219.

²⁸³ Gündoğdu, *Bir Türk Mutasavvıfı Abdülmeccid Sivâsî*, p. 79: “Pâdişâh hazretleri, devletin ömrünün uzun olmasını... istiyorsa ehl-i hak kimseleri arayıp bulmalı ve vaki' hali onlardan sormalıdır... 'âlimler, sâlihler ve 'ârifler Allah'ın cemâl ve kemâlinin mir'atıdır.”; Sivâsî, *Letâifü'l-Ezhâr*, fol. 166a: “Gâfillerle sohbetten kaçmak ve ehl-i hak olanlara tevazu' ve mütekebbir ve zâlim olanlara hak için tekebbür ve halkın cefâsına sabr ve elem ve şiddet deminde rızâ ve tahammul ve bit-tab' şecâ'at, gördüğü ayıbı örtmek ... şer'i şerîfi ... izhâr ... ede.”

²⁸⁴ Sivâsî, *Letâifü'l-Ezhâr*, fol. 174b: “Pâdişâhımız hazretleri dahi ehl-i hakdır, niyeti hâlis ve murâdı hakdır... dâimâ kalb-i şerîfi i'lâ-i şer' ile mesrûr ve 'adâsı müdemmir ve mefhûr ola.”

²⁸⁵ Kadıızâde Mehmed İlmî Efendi, *Nüşhü'l Hükkâm ve Sebeb-i Nizâm*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS Aşir Efendi 327, fol. 5b.

Both the high-ranking *ulema* and people with modest backgrounds wrote upon the request of Ahmed I. People like Kadızâde İlmî Efendi²⁸⁶ who did not hold a high-ranking post managed to find the means to convey their ideas to the sultan. What was Ahmed I's aim in creating such a wide channel for book production? "Was it an attempt to built alternative channels of influence and alliance against the more powerful elites?"²⁸⁷ It seems that there was a twofold benefit both for Ahmed and these writers; by producing for the sultan they had opportunities to gain some benefits in return and to become involved in the administrative machinery. Moreover, Ahmed tried to disperse his influence over all the layers of the society by using patronage networks very efficiently and he was promoting his image as a just and law-abiding ruler who highly valued the ideas of the *ulema* representing the *shari'a*.

"The *ulema* were expected to be a unifying force in society, bringing together diverse structures of the faith and legitimizing the sovereign authority."²⁸⁸ For this reason, they probably became involved in the business of writing for the sultan. However, beyond their legitimizing role, what was their aim by being involved in this cultural environment? Can we build a connection between the youth of the sultan and the considerable number of books written for and presented to him? Was there a real concern by the *ulema* to consult the young sultan in order to advise him the right way to become a virtuous ruler? Did these books have a politically practical value? Did Ahmed really read and learn from these books? A very important part of their motivation was probably to build power and patronage networks. Perhaps they had the aim of influencing the young sultan as well, as Ahmed I was very young when he was enthroned. Ahmed gave value to the advice of the *ulema* and we know from Sâfi that he liked to learn about the reigns of previous rulers and extract lessons from these accounts.

II.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I looked at the general political-ideological problems behind Ahmed I's royal patronage while discussing his reign with respect to how he tried to

²⁸⁶ For a biographic information on Kadızâde İlmî Efendi, see Uşakizâde, *Zeyl-i Şakâ'ik*, facsimile with index by Hans Joachim Kissling as '*Usaqizâde's Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Gelehrter und Gottesmänner des osmanischen Reiches im 17. Jahrhundert (Zeyl-i Saqâ'iq)*' (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965), pp. 43-45; Also for a discussion on Kadızâde Mehmed İlmî Efendi's *Nüshü'l Hükkâm ve Sebeb-i Nizâm*, see Terzioğlu, "Sunna Minded Sufi."

²⁸⁷ Terzioğlu, "Sunna Minded Sufi," p. 250.

²⁸⁸ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, p. 231.

emulate Sultan Süleyman in a time of “crisis and change” in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman imperial establishment. In this regard, I particularly focused on the questions of how the power and authority of the sultan were defined and legitimized through purposely commissioned works by Ahmed I and how the books of ethics became tools to legitimize the actions of a young sultan. We have seen that Ahmed worked systematically to advertise such a powerful image by commissioning an imperial mosque, conducting auspicious ceremonies, hunting expenditures and supervising many other public works to show his power and wealth mirroring that of Süleyman. Also, we saw that Ahmed I placed emphasis on the production of books on ethics. He supervised the production of books that had similar contents and messages especially on sultanic justice, governance, piety and morality. Ahmed I created favorites and patronage brokers helping him to fashion himself as reviving the golden age of Süleyman. In this respect, we have seen the role of El-Hac Mustafa Agha and his relationship with Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi. They came together for their interest in the production of books of advice. They produced three books for the sultan, representing him as just, pious, and powerful having all the good moral character necessitated for a legitimate ruler. In order to clarify my point, I gave examples from the books that were written for Ahmed I. In the next and final chapter, I will examine the translation and the content of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* to see how the kingly virtues of Ahmed I were constructed by Abdülaziz Efendi.

CHAPTER III

A DISCOURSE ON THE SULTANIC IMAGE OF SULTAN AHMED I AS IT IS CONSTRUCTED IN *AHLÂK-I SULTÂN AHMEDÎ*

The main aim of this chapter is to show how one particular book on ethics, namely *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, served as a “domain to discuss the political” during the reign of Ahmed I.²⁸⁹ In other words, in what follows, I will examine the content of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* with respect to the question of how a book on ethics helped Sultan Ahmed to create and strengthen his sultanic image as “a second Süleyman.” Overall, this chapter aims to uncover the contemporary discourses on kingly virtues of Ahmed I as they are constructed and propagated in his book by Abdülaziz Efendi as well as by other books commissioned by the sultan in a similar context. In this sense, first of all, I will concentrate on the preface section of the book to uncover the reasons of the translation and authorial intentions of Abdülaziz Efendi. It will serve to understand how *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was written to fashion Ahmed I’s moral qualities. Then, I will compare the content of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* with another contemporary book, *Zübdetü’-t-Tevârîh* which was written around the same time in the name of Sultan Ahmed. This comparative perspective will give a nuanced understanding of how these books, which had similar contents talking about the characteristics of ideal sultans, were commissioned to promulgate the exceptional moral character of Sultan Ahmed. Finally, I will examine the stories and anecdotes cited in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* to uncover the arguments on the kingly virtues of Ahmed I as constructed by Abdülaziz Efendi. Also, I will compare the content of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* with the themes on Ahmed I’s kingly virtues as constructed by Safi Efendi in his *Zübdetü’-t-Tevârîh*.

III.1. The Purpose of the Translation: The Preface of the Book

As mentioned before, Hocaşâde Abdülaziz translated *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* in 1612, and named his book *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. He did not make a word-for-word translation; rather he added his original poems and sections on the virtuous qualities of Ahmed I. Hence, the translation was shaped by Abdülaziz Efendi’s interventions.

Here the question may arise why Abdülaziz Efendi translated this book into Ottoman Turkish although it had been hitherto translated a number of times. The

²⁸⁹ Baki Tezcan, “Ethics as a Domain to Discuss the Political: Kınalışâde Ali Efendi’s *Ahlâk-ı ‘Alâî*” in *International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World*, ed. Ali Çaksu (İstanbul: IRSICA, 2001).

motivation behind this translation was the request of Sultan Ahmed I who was very interested in reading books on ethics, covering anecdotes on the virtuous behaviors of ideal rulers of the past. As mentioned in the second chapter, he wanted to create an image that was just, pious, brave and generous working for the happiness of his subjects. By inserting his original poems and anecdotes praising kingly virtues of Ahmed I, Abdülaziz Efendi, indeed, portrayed Sultan Ahmed as one of such ideal rulers cited in the book, and contributed Sultan Ahmed's positive image. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the aim of the translation, as will be seen, was to present kingly virtues of Ahmed I.

The name of the book also reveals the intention of presenting Ahmed I's moral character. Abdülaziz Efendi says that he translated this book from Persian into Ottoman Turkish to spread these valuable stories among those who did not know Persian. He wrote the preface of the book in a stylistic language in the name of Ahmed I and named it as "*Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*" as the book was covering many stories on wisdom and moral lessons that were ornamented with the name of the sultan and with expressions exalting his good character.²⁹⁰ Abdülaziz makes a word play by equating the name *Sultân Ahmed* with the name *Muhsin* (beneficent) implying that Sultan Ahmed, who commissioned this work to be translated, had all the dispositions and good deeds which a ruler had to have to be the true ideal ruler.

I will devote the first part of this chapter to examining the political discourse found in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*'s preface section. The introductory section of any Ottoman political text reveals much about why and how it was produced. As demonstrated in a recent article by Baki Tezcan, the invocations sections are useful tools to understand the discursive problems found in an Ottoman text, enabling the reader to see the intentions of the translator and the purpose of the translation through the arguments stressed when invoking God, praising the prophet, four caliphs, and most importantly the sultan.²⁹¹ As Baki Tezcan observes, these sections can tell much about the subject of the text by the attributes that they emphasize. Also, one can foresee the central argument of the text in question if he is familiar with the socio-political context

²⁹⁰ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Nuruosmaniye, fols. 17a-17b.

²⁹¹ For a detailed study on invocation sections of Ottoman literary productions, see Baki Tezcan, "The Multiple Faces of the One: The Invocation Section of Ottoman Literary Introductions as a Locus for the Central Argument of the Text," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 12/1 (2009), pp. 27-41.

within which the book was situated.²⁹² Therefore, this part will be devoted to the preface section of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* to reveal the purpose of the translation through the arguments stressed by Abdülaziz Efendi.

III.1.1. The patrons: Ahmed I and El-Hac Mustafa as They are Presented in the Preface Section

It is possible to read the purpose of the translation from the sections invoking God, praising the prophet, four caliphs and the sultan in the introductory section. Hence, this part will focus on these sections in order to elucidate the central argument of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. I will search for key sentences, words and attributes to see how the aim of the book is to present the virtuous qualities of Sultan Ahmed.

Through the arguments in the *sebeb-i te'lîf* (reasons for the composition) section, Hocazâde Abdülaziz gives clues about the arguments in the rest of the book. It is obvious that the translator emphasizes the good qualities of Ahmed I through the use of verses from the Qur'an. "We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds."²⁹³ "(Allah) gives sovereignty to whom he wills."²⁹⁴ Abdülaziz stresses that the throne was bestowed upon Ahmed I who is equipped with "the ethics of God"²⁹⁵ and his good moral character is safe and secure from all deficiencies (*ahlâk-ı cemîleleri ... noksân u mehâkdan me'mûndur*). The sultan is known for his kindness (*mekârim-i ahlâk*) as well as his mercy and acts of affectionate solicitude (*merâhim-i eşfâk*). As can be seen, the translator gives a hint in the preface of the book about his preoccupation that the sultan already has perfect moral qualities. Therefore this signals that the arguments in the rest of the book will reveal the greatness of Ahmed I as the ideal sultan.

As mentioned in the second chapter of this study, Sultan Ahmed wanted to portray himself as a "second Süleyman" and his empire as the revival of Süleyman's ideal period. This aim of presenting Ahmed I as a "second Süleyman" is very explicit in the preface of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. Abdülaziz repeatedly emphasizes that Sultan Ahmed is the inheritor of the throne of Süleyman (*vâris-i evreng-i Süleymân odur*).²⁹⁶

²⁹² Tezcan, "The Multiple Faces of the One," pp. 38-39.

²⁹³ *Qur'an* 21:107; *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay, fol. 7a.

²⁹⁴ *Qur'an*, 3:26; *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay, fol. 7b.

²⁹⁵ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay, fol. 7a.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, fols. 7b: "*Vâris-i mülk-i Süleymân.*" and 9b: "*Vâris-i evreng-i Süleymân odur.*"

Ahmed I is the shadow of the grace of God (*sâye-i rahmet-i ilâhî*)²⁹⁷ as he is like a shining sun removing the tyranny of insubordination and rebellions. He is the shadow of God on earth (*es-sultânu zillu'llâhi fi'l-arz*)²⁹⁸ that he represents the authority and justice of God. Hence, the happiness of the subjects is guaranteed at the time of his just rule.

By complying with the tradition, Abdülaziz Efendi writes long passages invoking God, praising the deeds of the prophet, and four caliphs. Although the invocation and praising section uses a conventional language that is largely considered as a part of the modus operandi of book production in the Ottoman world, still we can see the messages of the author behind this conventional language. For instance, in the part where he is praising the prophet, Abdülaziz Efendi emphasizes the name of the prophet as Ahmed (the most praised one). In this section, he composed a *kasîde* (poem) in which he praises Prophet Muhammed by writing that “Ahmed (the prophet) was chosen by God... He has a praised character.”²⁹⁹ The fact that he addresses the prophet as Ahmed gives a reasonable ground to speculate that he uses the name Ahmed allegorically to bring to minds the sultan and his good character following the example of the prophet and the right path of the *Sunna*.³⁰⁰ Probably, he wants to make the reader remember the name of the sultan, and that his good deeds resemble those of the prophet implying the sultan was chosen by God to rule. Ahmed I also believed that he was chosen by God to be the sultan. Ahmed wrote his poems under the penname *Bahtî* (literary, fortunate). Mustafa Sâfi explains the meaning of this name with Ahmed’s good fortune in ascending to the throne.³⁰¹ Ahmed was the third son of Mehmed III. He ascended to the throne despite having expectations that one of his elder brothers would probably take the throne. Hence, he strongly believed that God bestowed the throne on him.³⁰²

²⁹⁷ Ibid., fol. 9a.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., fol. 9b.

²⁹⁹ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedi*/Altınpay, fol. 4b: “Ahmed-i müctebâ delîl-i hüdâ // Zâtı Mahmud u hulki Ahmed’dür...”

³⁰⁰ Ibid., fol. 3b: “*Tarîk-i sünnet-i seniyyesine sülûk ehem u elzemdür.*”

³⁰¹ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 8.

³⁰² Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” pp. 97-98.

Abdülaziz Efendi continues with praising four caliphs. He exalts Ebu Bekir for his justice (*'adl*), moral maturity, grace and generosity (*fazl u kerem*),³⁰³ Ömer for his justice, for his bravery (*şecâ'at*) and for being destroyer of those who cause trouble persistently (*hâdim-i bünyân-ı fesâd u 'inâd*),³⁰⁴ Osman for his moral maturity, clemency and modesty (*hilm u hayâ*), and 'Alî for his bravery against the enemy and for the strength of his sword (*hayder-i kerrâr-ı sâhib-i Zülfikâr*). Abdülaziz possibly focused on these exemplary characters of the four caliphs to prepare the ground to speak to the commendable character of Ahmed I. As we will see in the second part of this chapter, Abdülaziz Efendi attributed these good moral behaviors such as justice, bravery, and generosity to Ahmed I through inserting passages about the sultan's moral qualities when translating the book. Also, as will be comparatively seen later, Sâfi Efendi attributed all these good characteristics to Ahmed I as well. Sâfi relates stories from the life of Sultan Ahmed to prove that he carries all these moral behaviors necessary for a ruler to be considered as great, magnificent.

There is a conscious attempt to strengthen the religious image of Ahmed I, which is the subject of the first chapter of the translation. Abdülaziz gives special importance to the use of collocations such as “helper of God concerning the affairs of the world and religion” (*mu 'înü 'd-dünyâ ve 'd-dîn*), “the protector of the people of Islam and the guardian of the lands of the Muslims” (*hâfiz-ı beyzatü 'l-İslâm, hâmî-i bilâdü 'l-Müslimîn*), “reinforce of the religion of Islam” (*takviyet-i dîn-i mübîn*), and “whose desire is to spread the words of Allah” (*dil-hâhu i 'lâ'-i kelimetu 'llâh*). This portrayal of Ahmed I as a saintly figure protecting the religion which is first put forward in the invocation of God, the praise of the prophet and his companions, spreads through the whole text of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*.

According to Abdülaziz Efendi, the sultan's biggest desire is to spread the words of God everywhere. Hence, the lands of Islam are protected and flourish as his soldiers have been gaining victories in every war.³⁰⁵ Under the shadow of his justice, Muslims know that they are protected from the evils of tyranny.³⁰⁶ In these lines, the sultan is praised for his kingly qualities such as justice as well as strength and bravery against the enemies of Muslims. Although there was no major victory against the enemies of Islam,

³⁰³ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay, fol. 6a.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 6a-6b.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, fols. 8b-9a.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 10a: “*Sâye-i 'adlinde anun müslimîn // oldı gâm ı zulm ü sitemden emîn.*”

Ahmed I, Abdülaziz Efendi portrays him as a victorious sultan having an all-victorious army protecting Muslims from the oppressions of enemies.

Hocazâde Abdülaziz also notes that although there has been disorder and sedition (*fitne vü fesâd*) in previous times, the empire has recovered from these problems as the evildoers (*ehl-i fesâd*) were banished from the cities at the time of Ahmed I. Hence, the complaints (*cevr ü sitem*) have vanished and the subjects live in peace.³⁰⁷ The translator probably alluded to the victory against the *Celâlis*. As mentioned in the second chapter of this study, Ahmed used the victory against *Celâli* rebels to present himself triumphantly like the previous emperors fighting in the name of Islam. We see the same argument in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* that Abdülaziz Efendi overrates the successes of Ahmed I to prove that he is the ideal ruler of the empire fighting for the happiness and well-being of his subjects.

As a final crucial note, Abdülaziz Efendi does not forget to talk about El-Hac Mustafa Agha. He begins to praise El-Hac Mustafa immediately after the sultan. According to the translator, Mustafa Agha is the quintessence of the honorable (*zübdetü'l-emâcîd ve'l-mükerremîn*), source of clemency and modesty (*menba'ı hilm ü hayâ*), source of truthfulness (*ma'den-i sıdk*), keeper of the reality and loyalty (*gencîne-i hakikat u vefâ*). His services are numerous and he is known for his trustworthiness and religiosity (*hidmetleri vüfûr, emânet u diyânetle ma'rûf*). He is qualified with devotion and uprightness (*sadâkat ve istikâmetle mevsûf*). Hocazâde Abdülaziz underlines the religious character of the agha who endowed some of his property (*vakf*) for the needy living in Mecca and Medina (*haremeyn*). He pays attention to collect the revenues of the *vakf* and send them to Mecca and Madina to gain the favor of Allah.³⁰⁸ After praising the agha, Abdülaziz says that the book was sent to translate through the medium of El-Hac Mustafa. Hocazâde writes that the agha whose only thought is to learn lessons from the righteous *ulema* and to dispense mercy brought the book to translate in order to relate the unique, unprecedented example of the sultan as a result of his deference towards the sultan.³⁰⁹

As examined in the second chapter, El-Hac Mustafa, who was a powerful favorite and patronage broker, worked hard to help the sultan to fashion a powerful

³⁰⁷ Ibid., fols. 8b-9a.

³⁰⁸ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Nuruosmaniye, fols. 15a-15b.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., fol. 15b.

sultanic image. Hence, he became a very powerful figure in the court of Ahmed I. Proving El-Hac Mustafa's power and prestige in the court, Abdülaziz Efendi uses a very inflated language when praising Mustafa Agha in the preface of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. It seems, for Abdülaziz, El-Hac Mustafa is equally worth praising together with the sultan. This situation shows that the patronage broker, El-Hac Mustafa, was acting like a co-ruler of this translation project together with Sultan Ahmed I.

To conclude, it can be inferred from the key sentences stressed by Abdülaziz Efendi that the aim of conveying the example of Ahmed I among the ideal sultans cited in *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* is the real motive behind producing the translation. Hence, the main arguments of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* should be examined to be able to understand how the sultanic image of Ahmed I was represented in the book. "Mirrors for princes" usually have a conventional style and they present similar political ideals. However, this aspect of the mirrors does not necessarily disqualify them from being mirrors of contemporary society. In the following parts, I will try to show how the discourse of power was constructed through this refined and pleasant prose illustrated by stories on the lives of previous emperors.

III.1.2. The Intentions of the Translator: Expectation for a Reappointment

Abdülaziz relates that Ahmed I regularly spent his glorious times reading famous and important books, and also wanted these reputable stories and good deeds to be written down in order to make these commendable moral dispositions and admired works known among society. Toward that end, the sultan frequently ordered the members of the ulema to write books, histories and pamphlets.³¹⁰ We know from Sâfi Efendi that Ahmed liked to read about the lives of previous rulers and extract lessons from them. In this sense, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* probably attracted the attention of the sultan in that the book covered many anecdotes on the moral virtues of previous rulers. Moreover, sponsoring the translation of such an admired book would bring prestige to its owner.³¹¹

Similarly, Sultan Ahmed wanted *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* to be translated on his behalf; therefore, he sent the book to Abdülaziz Efendi in order to be translated with the

³¹⁰ Ibid., fol. 15b.

³¹¹ Christoph K. Neumann, "Üç Tarz-ı Mütalaa: Yeniçağ Osmanlı Dünyası'nda Kitap Yazmak ve Okumak," *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 1/1 (2005), pp. 51-76, at p. 69.

intermediation of El-Hac Mustafa Agha. Abdülaziz Efendi translated the book into Ottoman Turkish to make it known to those who did not know Persian.

Abdülaziz Efendi gives crucial information on the book that he translated. He relates that Kâşifî wrote a book when he learnt that some of the previous sultans attended the assemblies of the ulema, and esteemed for the good advice of such virtuous people. Therefore, upon hearing the stories of these sultans who took good advice from wise people, Kâşifî wrote *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* to commemorate these sultans and to relate stories of morality from their lives. Having commented on the motives of Kâşifî, Abdülaziz remarks that if Kâşifî had seen the Ottoman sultans, he would forget about these previous rulers and become silent. He would become a servant in the assembly of Ottoman sultans, listening only to those compassionate rulers. In this sense, Abdülaziz Efendi begins to praise Ottoman sultans for their adherence to *shari'a* and *sunna* of the prophet, their desire to carry out war to defend Islam, and their care and esteem for the ulema. Abdülaziz says that thanks to the good characters of Ottoman sultans, the lands of Islam have thrived and prospered and those who were in error (*küfr*) were ruined.³¹² By relating this story on Kâşifî and his motives writing *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, Abdülaziz probably tries to position his translation above Kâşifî's work as he is translating this book for an Ottoman sultan who has exceptional ethical qualities, making this translation more valuable than Kâşifî's book.

Abdülaziz's intentions become quite visible as the narrative goes on. For instance, he surprisingly makes references to the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III rather than Sultan Süleyman, who was Ahmed I's role-model, as noted before. He continues with explaining how these sultans showed respect to his father, Hoca Sadeddin, revealing their great esteem for the *ulema*. In this respect, Abdülaziz relates the story of Mehmed III's Eğri Campaign in 1596 to uncover his father's benevolence with his wise counsels during the war. After narrating Hoca Sadeddin's benevolence during the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III, he then writes that they also showed great esteem for Sadeddin Efendi's sons. After reporting the great reverence of these previous rulers for the *ulema* by using the example of his family, he continues to narrate how Ahmed I showed respect to the *ulema*. He explains his point by giving examples again from his family. He says that during the reign of Ahmed I his brother Mehmed was appointed as the chief mufti, and Esad was given the office of the chief judgeship

³¹² *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay, fols. 10b-11a.

of Rumelia. And the translator himself became the chief judge of Anatolia and Rumelia respectively. Obviously, the translator gives the example of his family to remind Sultan Ahmed I of his position as a member of a strong *ulema* family.

Why does Abdülaziz place such strong emphasis on the role of the *ulema*? Why does he refer to the recent past rather than the period of Süleyman who is the role model of Ahmed I? Why does he relate the story of his father and his brothers to explain the importance of the *ulema*? Abdülaziz refers to the recent period that he also experienced. In that past, the *ulema* and their children were held in high esteem. As mentioned in the first chapter, Abdülaziz Efendi was out of office while writing his work. By aggrandizing the periods of Murad III and Mehmed III, he probably tried to create grounds to question his removal from the office. By placing such stress on the role of the *ulema* as showing the right path and giving good counsel, he probably advertised his role as a member of *ulema* in order to be reappointed to the judgeship of Rumelia. We can speculate that Abdülaziz wants Ahmed I to remember what a good, pious and powerful *ulema* family he came from and how he deserves to be reappointed to a high position.

In the very beginning of his book, as mentioned above, Abdülaziz Efendi writes a *kasîde* exalting the exceptional moral quality of the prophet and he intentionally addresses the prophet as Ahmed. Abdülaziz ends this *kasîde* by saying, “Give Aziz a hand, my sultan // Repair my devastated heart //... // Look at me with kindness of your glance// Let me be assembled along with your companions.”³¹³ Although one cannot be sure whether Abdülaziz wants to be closer to the prophet or to the sultan, the fact that he wrote these lines when he was deposed from the judgeship of Rumelia gives an impression that the actual addressee is Ahmed I. Hocazâde Abdülaziz probably made this allegory to ask the sultan for a reappointment by uttering how much he desired to be “assembled along with (Ahmed’s) companions.”

III.2. A Comparative Perspective: *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* and *Zübdetü't-Tevârîh*

As seen in the second chapter, Sultan Ahmed had an interest in books on ethics talking about the virtuous moral character of ideal sultans. Several books on ethics, examined in the second chapter, were written in the name of Ahmed I. Indeed, the sultan had a concern to cultivate a powerful image for himself that he commissioned

³¹³ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay., fol. 5b: “Destgîr ol ‘Azîz’e sultânüm // Eyle ta’mîr kalb-i vîrânüm //... // Nazar-ı lutf ile idüp manzûr // Eyle ashâb ile beni mahşûr.”

many books on ethics that had similar contents revealing the kingly virtues of ideal sultans. Sultan Ahmed probably wanted his name to be remembered among these ideal sultans. Safi's *Zübdetü't-Tevârih* can be a good example of this kind. The first volume of *Zübdetü't-Tevârih* was actually was more than a history book; it was a way to propagate the beneficial actions of the sultan and to fashion a powerful image. Moreover, the sultan commissioned many Persian books on ethics to be translated into Ottoman Turkish; such as *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*, *Celâl u Cemâl* and *Miftâhü's-Sa'âde*. As mentioned in the second chapter of this study, all these books serve Ahmed I to strengthen his image; they were translated with a concern to relate Ahmed I's kingly virtues. The translators situated Sultan Ahmed among the ideal virtuous kings of the past by inserting long parts praising Ahmed I. This situation shows how these books were produced as part of the same political and intellectual agenda.³¹⁴ Therefore, they become meaningful when we read them comparatively. In this part, therefore, I will compare the contents of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* and *Zübdetü't-Tevârih*.

The chapter titles of these two books will provide an overview. *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* covers 40 chapters; 1) Divine worship (*İbâdet*), 2) Sincerity (*İhlâs*), 3) Prayer (*Du'a*), 4) Thanksgiving (*Şükür*), 5) Patience (*Sabr*), 6) Contentment (*Rızâ*), 7) Reliance on God (*Tevekkül*), 8) Modesty (*Hayâ*), 9) Continence (*İffet*), 10) Decorum (*Âdâb*), 11) Ambition (*Ulüvv-i Himmet*), 12) Resolution (*Azm*), 13) Effort and striving (*Cidd ü Cehd*), 14) Firmness (*Sebât*), 15) Justice (*Adâlet*), 16) Forgiveness (*Afv*), 17) Clemency (*Hilm*), 18) Politeness and courtesy (*Hulk u Rıfk*), 19) Compassion and mercy (*Şefkat ve Merhamet*), 20) Charitable works (*Hayrât ve Meberrât*), 21) Generosity and graciousness (*Sehâ ve İhsân*), 22) Humility and reverence (*Tevâzu' ve İhtirâm*), 23) Trustworthiness and probity (*Emânet ve Diyânet*), 24) Keeping pledges (*Ahde Vefâ*), 25) Truthfulness (*Sıdk*), 26) The satisfaction of the needs (of people)(*İncâh-ı Hâcât*), 27) Careful deliberation (*Te'ennî ve Te'emmül*), 28) Taking counsel and planning (*Meşveret ve Tedbîr*), 29) Prudence (*Hazm*), 30) Bravery (*Şecâ'at*), 31) Zeal (*Gayret*), 32) The punitive capacity (of the sultan)(*Siyâset*), 33) Vigilance and watchfulness (*Teyakkuz ve Hibret*), 34) Sagaciousness (*Firâset*), 35) Keeping secrets (*Kitmân-ı Esrâr*), 36) On seizing opportunities and striving to acquire a good name (*İğtinâm-ı Fırsat*)37) Respecting (people's) rights (*Ri'âyet-i Hukûk*), 38) Keeping company with

³¹⁴ Halil İnalçık sees the production of advice books as the demonstration of sultanic authority, see Halil İnalçık, "Kutadgu Bilig'de Türk ve İran Siyaset Nazariye ve Gelenepleri" in *Reşit Rahmeti Arat İçin*, ed. İbrahim Kafesoğlu (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1966), pp. 259-271.

the righteous (*Sohbet-i Ahyâr*), 39) Repulsing the wicked (*Def'-i Eşrâr*), 40) The treatment of courtiers (*Tertîb-i Hadem ve Haşem*).³¹⁵

Sâfî's *Zübdetü't-Tevârîh* was written by the sultan's personal preacher around the same time as *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* between 1609 and 1615. Sâfî Efendi wrote this book upon the order of the sultan to reveal his kingly virtues. The first volume of *Zübde* comprises twelve chapters. I will give related chapters: 1) Sultan Ahmed's justice and piety, 2) Sultan Ahmed I's practicing worship with the community, 3) Sultan Ahmed's care for building projects, 4) Sultan Ahmed's intelligence and judgmental character, 5) Sultan Ahmed's modesty 6) Sultan Ahmed's generosity, 7) The chanting of the Mevlit in Sultan Ahmed Mosque, 8) Sultan Ahmed's order for the restoration of Ka'ba, 9) Sultan Ahmed's order for the construction of other public buildings, 10) Sultan Ahmed's physical strength, good horsemanship and talent for using weapons, 11) Sultan Ahmed's having a great interest in hunt, 12) Sultan Ahmed's bravery. Sâfî devotes this volume to the stories (*menâkıb*) from the life of Sultan Ahmed to illustrate the moral values that he had, so that the audience would know how Ahmed I was the ideal ruler. I quote Rhoads Murphey at length to clarify my point;

The possession by the currently reigning Ottoman sultan of the high moral traits, intellectual abilities and physical attributes ascribed to the figure of the ideal ruler in the standard canon on Islamic statecraft deserved celebration not only because these high virtues were personified by the current Ottoman ruler, but because they typified the Ottoman regime itself.³¹⁶

As is evident from the chapter listed above, these two works, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* and *Zübdetü't-Tevârîh* have many chapters talking on similar issues. For instance, Abdülaziz Efendi inserts passages on Ahmed I in the chapters on justice, piety, generosity, and bravery. Also, he tries to justify Sultan Ahmed Mosque. As mentioned in the second chapter, we see the same concerns in Sâfî's *Zübde*. This situation shows that these books were a way to advertise a powerful sultanic image for Ahmed I. In this sense, one can say that Abdülaziz did more than translating a book that was written a hundred years ago for a Timurid Sultan. He situated the book within the political

³¹⁵ Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Summa on Ethics," p. 609.

³¹⁶ Murphey, "Mustafa Sâfî 's Version of the Kingly Virtues," p. 7.

context of his own period.³¹⁷ Therefore, this translation can be a mirror reflecting the political, religious and cultural concerns that were prevalent in the court of Ahmed I who, as examined in the second chapter, showed great effort to portray himself as a “second Süleyman” who was a just, pious, and strong ruler having a high moral character. In this sense, he sponsored large-scale architectural projects to show his religiosity, auspicious ceremonies to demonstrate that his reign was a time of prosperity, festivities to fashion his generosity, and hunting expeditions to prove his bravery and his desire to lead a campaign, and also sponsored many ethical advice books to be written or translated to strengthen his image as a “second Süleyman.”

III.3. Kingly Virtues of Ahmed I as Constructed in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*

It is important to note yet again that Abdülaziz Efendi did not make a verbatim translation of *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî* in that he frequently inserted his own passages and poems in order to praise Ahmed I, which, in a sense, shows how he followed a strategy to augment the sultanic image of Ahmed I. Therefore, those chapters which include the translator’s own writings allow us to decipher a particular political intention that shaped the production of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*.

Also, as mentioned earlier, to be able to build a reasonable argument, I will compare the content of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* with the stories on the sultan’s morality related in Sâfî Efendi’s *Zübdetü’-t-Tevârih* in order to see the reflections of the anecdotes cited in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* in the life of Ahmed I. This comparative perspective will give a nuanced understanding of how Ahmed endeavored to drive a portrait of an ideal sultan having high moral quality. Also, it will enable us to understand how these books on ethics commissioned by the sultan and his patronage brokers were part of the same political, cultural and intellectual agenda and how these books were part of a meaningful ensemble. As examined in the second chapter, such books helped Ahmed I in his endeavors to present an image of a powerful, just, active, generous and pious sultan. That said, let us look at the details of Abdülaziz Efendi’s extra insertions and compare them with the themes on the kingly virtues of Ahmed I in *Zübdetü’-t-Tevârih*.

³¹⁷ For a detailed study on Ottoman Turkish translations, see Derin Terzioğlu, “Bir Tercüme ve Bir İntihal Vakası: Ya Da İbn Teymiyye’nin Siyâsetü’-ş-Şer’iyye’sini Osmanlıcaya Kim(ler) Nasıl Aktardı?” *Journal of Turkish Studies/Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 31/2 (2007), pp. 247-275.

III.3.1. The Pious Sultan

Abdülaziz makes an effort to prove the religiosity of Ahmed I. The first chapter of the book is dedicated to divine worship (*ibâdet*). For the aim of presenting an image that is religious, Abdülaziz prefers to add a section and a poem praising Ahmed I for his adherence to Islam. A whole chapter is arranged to mention the religious character of Ahmed I.

The dominant theme of the first section is that true happiness comes with practicing worship. Therefore, it is necessary to practice the religious duties of Islam and to avoid sins to be saved both in this world and hereafter. To be able to succeed in this end, the believers should follow the messages the prophet brought from Allah and his *sunna*.³¹⁸ Then, the story continues with the necessity of worship for the sultans whom the subjects take as an example. Accordingly, the sultans should embellish and strengthen their character with worship (*ibâdet*). As they have the throne in this world, they should also work to prepare a beautiful afterlife in heaven. They should spend their days working for the well-being of the subjects, and their nights to worship Allah.³¹⁹ If the sultan carefully practices worship, his subjects will follow the sultan's example.³²⁰ According to this model drawn by the author, the ideal ruler should follow the right path that is ordered by God, so that he should lead his subjects towards happiness both in this world and hereafter.

After giving examples from the life of the prophet's companion Ali, the translator illustrates his point with anecdotes on the life of Ahmed I. According to Abdülaziz, Ahmed is such a sultan that he seeks only for the will of God which leads the believer towards happiness. He tries to struggle to avoid the bad wishes of his soul (*nefs*). Abdülaziz clarifies his point with a verse from the Qur'an; "prevented the soul from the unlawful inclination."³²¹ The translator writes that the sultan always performs

³¹⁸ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Altınpay*, fol. 11a: "Mevâcib-i İslâmiyye olan ferâyiz ve vâcibâtı edâ ve sünen ü müstecebatı kemâ-yenbagî müeddâ kılup kabâyih ü münkerât ve menhiyyât ü muharremâtdan tehâşî vü intihâdur ... mülk-i şuhûdların ma'mûr ve sarây-ı bâtinların envâr-kerâmet ile pür-nûr kılmış ola ... Muhammed Mustafa hazretlerinin ahkâm-ı zâhirü'l-ibrâm-ı Rabbâniyyeden ve hudûd-ı şerâyi'-i Sübhâniyyeden teblîğ buyurdıkları umûra hüsn-i i'timâd ü i'tikâd ve kemâl-i ittibâ' u inkiyâd bâbında sa'y-i belîğ ve cehd-i bî-dirîğ ideler."

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 11b: "Gündüzler nazm-ı mehâmm-ı enâmda ihtimâm ve geceler hizmet-i Melik-i 'Allâmda kıyâm üzre olalar."

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 13a: "Her gâh ki, pâdişâh tâ'at ü 'ibâdete mâ'il ü tâlib ola, re'âyâ dahi ol kâra kalb ü kâleb ile müteveccih ve râgıb olurlar."

³²¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 13a; *Qur'an*, 79:40.

namâz with the community and the beautiful signs of the worship can be seen on his face.³²²

As we know from Sâfi, his image as a religious sultan following the right path of Islam is very important for Ahmed I. Therefore, the theme of performing *namâz* (prayer) with the community is very dominant in Sâfi's *Zübde*. At the very beginning of the book, Sâfi reserves a chapter to talk about the sultan's care for performing *namâz* with the community.³²³ According to Sâfi, what is necessary for a ruler (*imâm-i kavm*) is to search for and prepare necessary conditions for the community and to avoid neglecting the prayer. Correspondingly, Sultan Ahmed I never quit *namâz* whether it is wartime or peacetime.³²⁴ To make his point clear, Sâfi relates many anecdotes on the sultan's religiosity and his insistence for performing *namâz* on time. By writing a verse from the Qur'an, Sâfi tries to present a semi-sacred image for the sultan who will definitely have a beautiful afterlife.³²⁵

In short, it is the ideal sultan's duty to preserve the religion and maintain the orthodoxy (right belief). The sultan should model himself on the ultimate moral criteria established by the *sunna* of the prophet. Both Hocaşade Abdülaziz and Sâfi Efendi portrayed Ahmed I in a way to show he was strict in religious practices. This insistence on religion might be the result of a defensive strategy by the patrons and the translator to speak against some contemporary writers' views that neglect of the religion was the primary cause of the problems; such writers wanted a strict religious observance. As mentioned in the second chapter, one such writer was Abdülmecid Sivâsî. He wrote that to be able to solve the problems of the empire, the ruler should follow the right path of *sunna* and avoid intemperance.³²⁶ Therefore, such writers demanded the flourishing of religion in response to perceived crises. The sultan probably took such counsel seriously because the adherence to religiosity was important for the credibility of the sultan.

What is striking is that Abdülaziz seems to add this part on Ahmed I to prepare the ground to talk about the sultan's mosque, Ahmediyye. The construction was still

³²² Ibid., fol. 13a: "Yüzünde zâhir envâr-ı 'ibâdet ... Cemâ'atle kılar dâ'im namâzı."

³²³ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol I, pp. 37-46.

³²⁴ Ibid, pp. 37-38: "İkâmet-i salavât ve müdâvemet-i cemâ'âtda tehâvün ü müsâmaha ve ihmâl ü müsâhele itmeyüb, seferde ve hazarda terk etmek vakı' olmamışdır...çün imâm-ı kavme lâik ve muktedâ cemâ'ât hâline münâsib ü müvâfik olan hâl-i cemâ'âti tefekkud ve anların muktezâları ile tekayyud idüp, seferde ve hazarda ta'cil-i mücibi'l-ihlâl gibi tevîl ü imlâlden hazerde olmakdur."

³²⁵ Ibid, p. 37; *Qur'an* 23: 10-11: "Those are the inheritors who will inherit al- Firdaus. They will abide therein eternally."

³²⁶ Gündoğdu, *Bir Türk Mutasavvıfı Abdülmecid Sivâsî*, p. 79; Sivâsî, *Letâifü'l-Ezhâr*, fol. 166a.

continuing when Hocazâde Abdülaziz translated *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* between 1610 and 1612. As discussed in detail in the second chapter, building an imperial mosque was criticized by the *ulema* on the grounds that building an imperial project was a sign of profligacy when there was no booty gained from a conquest. Opposing such interpretations, Ahmed I and his favorite El-Hac Mustafa worked hard to counter all the objections and to justify this project. Also, we see the same aim in Sâfi Efendi's *Zübde*. He devotes a very long chapter to talk about his sultan's mosque, his religiosity and care for Islam. Sâfi Efendi legitimizes the imperial mosque with a verse from Qur'an: "The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day."³²⁷

Likewise, the same conscious attempt to justify this expensive building project can be read in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. Hocazâde Abdülaziz tries to relate this imperial project and other building projects with the sultan's piety and charitable endeavors. He associates the mosque with the sultan's religiosity and his care for the benefit of the community.³²⁸ The anecdote on Sultan Ahmed is devoted to developing the theme of the sultan's lack of concern with the desires of his soul (*müşteheyât-ı nefsâniyye*) and sensuous aspirations (*muktezeyât-ı şehvâniyye*).³²⁹ This theme of a self-denying and moderate sultan who only strives for the sake of God is probably developed to counter the negative interpretations about the imperial mosque that it is a waste of the treasury's resources when there are financial problems.

III.3.2. Sultanic Justice

The fifteenth chapter of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* is on justice, covering many stories on the characteristics of a just ruler. I will scrutinize this chapter together with related subjects covered in the other chapters, *siyâset*, *tertib-i hadem ve haşem* etc. The important point is that; rather than translating Kâşifi's eulogy of Sultan Baykara's just rule, Abdülaziz Efendi inserts a passage and a poem on the justice of Sultan Ahmed with an intention to show how Ahmed I is a just sultan who is personally concerned with the welfare of his subjects and his rule is a period of happiness. Such a

³²⁷ Ibid., p. 47; *Qur'an*, 9:18.

³²⁸ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay, fol. 13a: "Erkâm-ı sa'âdet encâmı 'ibâdât ile ârâste ve bâr-gâh-ı saltanat-ı devletleri zer ü zîver-i 'adâlet ile pirâstedür ve temhîd-i kavâ'id-i hayrât ve te'sîs-i mebâni-i müberrât vesîle-i rif'at-ı menzilet ve zerî'at-ı 'izzet-i ahiret olmağla ... ikâmet-i nevâfil ü mektûbat ve idâmet-i ezkâr ü cemâ'ât için ... fehvâsı üzre bir câmi'-i fâhir binâsına mübâşeret."

³²⁹ Ibid., fol. 13a.

construction serves as a powerful propaganda for the personal legitimacy of the sultan. Abdülaziz Efendi talks about these virtuous qualities of Ahmed I to probably demonstrate that the sultan deserves to be mentioned among those previous sultans who are known for their just rule. Hence, I will examine the themes on justice in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* and compare them with the related stories in *Zübde* so as to see the reflections of these virtuous qualities in the life of Ahmed I.

By adding the part glorifying Ahmed I's justice, Hocazâde Abdülaziz probably tries to connect Ahmed I to the previous sultans who are known for their justice. The translator proves that Sultan Ahmed actually carries all the virtuous behaviors mentioned in the anecdotes cited in this chapter. According to Abdülaziz, "all the works of Ahmed is to flourish the light of *shari'a*, hence the basis of his sultanate is stable and continuous and the building of his glory and felicity is strong. The light of the sun of his grace and beneficence is spread to the universe. It is clearly known that his mercy and kindness is written to the whole world; all the people are rejoice and cheerful. His biggest desire is to protect the country, to perform worship, to spread the justice, to make *gazâ* and *cihâd* (holy war), to stop sedition and disorder to repulse the people of unbelief, to remove those who deviate from the right way. Hence, the auspicious times of the subjects find peace and pleasure as well as the reasons of their gladness become excessive."³³⁰ These lines show how Ahmed is actually a just ruler, such that we can see the benevolent effects of his justice on the subjects.

According to Ottoman political thinkers, an essential quality of an ideal ruler was to personally dispense justice so as to guarantee the happiness of the subjects. First and foremost, a ruler is absolutely necessary for justice to be spread. "If there was no sultan who is the shadow of God on earth, people would devour each other and the order would perish."³³¹ Therefore, divine law necessitates a ruling sultan at all times "as the sultan is like the soul in the body."³³² The sultan represents the authority of God in

³³⁰ Ibid., fol. 60a: "*Sultân Ahmed Hân-ı 'âlî-mikdâr hazretlerinin hemvâre kârları ihyâ-yı şer'-i lâmi'u'l-envâr olmağla esâs-ı devlet ü saltanatları sâbit ü ber-karâr ve bünyân-ı 'izzet ü sa'âdetleri müstahkem ü üstüvâr olup envâr-ı âfütâb-ı fazl u ihsânları aktâr-ı cihâna resîde ve firâş-ı ikbâl ü iclâlleri basît-i 'âleme bisât-ı şefkat ve firâş-ı âtîfeti keşîde olmağla ... 'âmme-i halk-ı cihân mesrûr u handân oldukları müstağnî 'ani'il-beyândur. Hakkâ ki ... sultân ... hazretinin aksâ-yı murâdı himâyet-i bilâd ve ri'âyet-i 'ibâd ve işâ'a-i merâsim-i 'adl u dâd ve ikâmet-i gazâ u cihâda sa'y ü ictihâd ve kat'i 'urûk-ı fitne vü fesâd ve def'-i ehl-i küfr ü 'inâd ve izâle-i ashâb-ı zindeka vü ilhâd olmağla 'âmme-i enâmun evkât-ı ferhunde-sâ'âtleri safâ ve sürûra makrûn ve esbâb-ı şâdmâni ve kâmrânîleri hadden birün ... olmuştur."*

³³¹ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Peker, fol. 148b: "Eğer ki yeryüzünde zıllullâh olan pâdişâh olmasaydı benî âdem birbirini yirlerdi. Ya 'ni helâk ve mâ'düm iderlerdi."

³³² *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altunpay, fol. 45a: "Şehrde sultan, cesette can mesabesindedür."

that he institutes and implements necessary measures for justice to prevail among the subjects. The ruler maintains equilibrium in the society by using his coercive capacity (*siyâset*)³³³ which is justified by his upholding of shari‘a.³³⁴ A sultan who spreads justice is the shadow of God on earth.³³⁵ According to this, “one hour of justice of a sultan who protects his *re‘âyâ* (tax-paying subjects) is more appreciated than worship of sixty years because the worship is performed only for the benefit of one’s self, but the benefit of justice is for everyone, both for the elite and common people. Also, justice will be rewarded in the afterlife.”³³⁶

The anecdotes citing the importance of justice exemplify the classic notions of advice literature. One such anecdote suggests that a just non-Muslim ruler is better than an unjust Muslim ruler because the subjects will only be happy if the ruler implements justice. To illustrate this point, the story of Haccac (d. 714) who was an Umayyad governor and Nuşiveran who was a Sassanian king is told. Nuşiveran is associated in the minds of *re‘âyâ* (tax-paying subjects) with justice such that whenever they hear his name they remember his justice despite the king being a Zoroastrian (*âteş-perestî*). Although he was a Muslim ruler who saw the companions of the prophet, Haccac is remembered for his cruelty that people curse him for his injustice.³³⁷ Then the story continues with a saying of the prophet; “a just ruler’s body would never decompose.” According to the story, Abbasid ruler Me’mun wanted to prove the truth of this saying. He ordered the grave of Nuşirevan to be opened and he saw that the body was fresh as if he was sleeping.³³⁸ In essence, justice is seen above the correct religion when it comes to the well being of the subjects. To those who have read this story, Hocaşâde Abdülaziz’s words on Ahmed I become more meaningful. Sultan Ahmed is portrayed as the ideal ruler in that he performed worship and spread justice, so the happiness of the subjects enormously increased at the time of his rule.³³⁹

³³³ Al-Azmah, *Muslim Kingship*, p. 115. Azmah notes that this term is generally translated as “government”, but it has a particular meaning in “mirror for princes” literature. The term designates “the coercive capacity of the ruler” which is legitimized by his being the representative of God’s authority.

³³⁴ Subtelny, “A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics,” p. 605.

³³⁵ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Altınpay*, fol. 47b: “*Pâdişâh-ı âdâlet-şi‘âr rûy-ı zemînde sâye-i lutf-ı ilâhdur.*”

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 44b.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, fols. 46b-47a.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 48b-49a.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 60a.

One argument constructed in the stories of this chapter is about the necessity of an active sultan who personally deals with the business of ruling in order to guarantee justice. Corresponding to the idea of a sultan who is personally involved in the business of ruling, the sultan is expected to ensure that everyone will remain in their proper place, so that the weak would not be oppressed by the powerful. According to this, “the society was divided into four groups; the first one is the military who resemble fire, the second is members of the pen (bureaucrats) who resemble air, the third is the members of artisans and merchants who resemble water and the fourth is the members of husbandmen (peasants) who resemble earth. The emphasis is laid on the preservation of equality among people. Therefore, one group cannot be dominant over the other groups. Every group should know its proper place and act accordingly.”³⁴⁰ Otherwise, the order of the society and the state would face ruin.³⁴¹ According to this theory of four status groups, society is seen like a body, composed of four substances; water, fire, air, and earth. These four elements should stay in equilibrium, so that justice would prevail. Abdülaziz Efendi writes that,

“It is required from the sultans that they should perform the *namâz* (and other religious duties), act according to the *sunna* of the prophet, and also more importantly the sultans should behave towards the *re‘âyâ* with justice and mercy. If the rulers do not protect the rights of *re‘âyâ*, the strong would oppress the weak. If the weak are oppressed, the powerful would not remain in their proper place because people depend on each other for livelihood.”³⁴²

It is obvious that the most important element in this chain is the *re‘âyâ* who are the producers of the wealth as tax-paying subjects of the sultan. However, they are more open to oppression by the powerful. Therefore, keeping these four groups in their own places is very much related to the circle of justice. And justice could only be ensured by the regulating force of the sultan’s authority. To quote from Feleischer;

³⁴⁰ Ibid., fols. 47b-48a.

³⁴¹ Ibid., fol. 48b: “*Salâh-ı ‘âlem ve nizâm-ı benî âdem dahi berbâd ve mevâddd-ı fesâd müzdâd olur.*”

³⁴² Ibid., fols. 46a-46b: “*Pâdişâhlara ikâmet-i salâvat-ı hams ve sâyir ferâyiz ve sünenden sonra ‘adl ile ‘ibâdullâh mesâlihine iştigâlden vâcipter ve sıfat-ı nasfet ile ittisâf ü re‘âyâyâ nazar-ı ‘adâlet ve insâf ile nigerân olmadan lâzım ve lâzıbtter bir emr dahi yokdur. Zirâ ‘adâlet ve insâf ile re‘âyâ ri ‘âyet ve niçe şikence-i ehl-i sitemden himâyet olunmasa erbâb-ı kuvvet ü şevket zu ‘afâ-yı ümmete dest-i tegallübü dirâz ve dest-i cevr ü sitem bâz ve her zâlim mezâlime âğaz ider. Çün mânend-i mür-ı bî-zür olan fukarâ ve zu ‘afâ hâk-i helâke düşe, akviyânun dahi birisi kendü mertebesinde ber-karâr ve kişver-i serveride pâydâr olmaz. Zirâ halâyıkun rişte-i ma‘işetleri biri birine beste ve hibâl-i intizâm-ı ahvâlleri âherün mu ‘avenet ü imdâdına peyvestedür.*”

There can be no royal authority without the military; there can be no military without wealth; the subjects produce the wealth; justice preserves the subjects' loyalty to the sovereign; justice requires harmony in the world; the world is a garden, its walls are the state; the Holy Law orders the state; there is no support for the Holy Law expect through royal authority.³⁴³

The sultan should strive to gain the favor of Allah. "Allah orders (the rulers) to be qualified with justice by saying in the Qur'an that 'indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct.'" This can be gained by hearing the voices of those who are subjected to injustice and by being beneficent towards the needy."³⁴⁴ Correspondingly, the sultan should personally supervise the affairs of the state; he must inspect the behaviors of his officials toward the subjects to be able to prevent them from being tyrannical.³⁴⁵

It is the custom of the just sultans that they appoint trustworthy people to gain information on the conditions of their subjects. So, they can take necessary measures for the well-being of the people. In this way, the sultans can avoid being tyrannical.³⁴⁶ To have an efficient rule, a sultan should have four groups of trustworthy people to be informed, each of which is indispensable because the absence of any of these would result in the destruction of the "building of the sultanate" (*binâ-yı saltanat*). The first of these is an *emîr* (military commander) who protects the frontiers of the empire and saves the sultan and the subjects from the evils of the enemy. The second is a *vezîr* who collects the taxes properly and distributes them justly. The third is a *hâkim* (judge) who controls the conditions of the people, provides justice for the weak, and overthrows the

³⁴³ Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and 'Ibn Khaldunism' in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Letters," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18/3-4 (1983), pp. 198-220, at p.201.

³⁴⁴ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Altınpay*, fols. 44a-44b: "*Hak Sübhânehu ve Te 'âlâ zümre-i bendegâna sıfat-ı 'adl ile ittisâf için emr ü fermân idüp Kur'ân-ı celîlü's-şânda ... buyurmuşdur. Fi'l-hakîka 'adl mazlumun ferrîyâdını gûş idüp ... ihsân-ı muhtâcîne hâcet-resân olup ... sine-i pür-cerâhatlerine merâhim-i merâhim ile ilâcdur.*"

³⁴⁵ Ann Lambton, "Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship," *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), pp. 91-119, at p. 104.

³⁴⁶ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Peker*, fol. 153b: "*Teyakkuz ahvâl-i memlekete vâkıf ve hibret ef'âl-i ra'ıyyete âgâh ve ârif olmakdır. Ve mülük-ı 'adâlet-i sülûkdan müte'arif ve ma'hûd ve mesmu meşhur olan budur ki, etvâr-ı nâsı istihbâr ve ahvâl-i 'âlemi tefehhus u istifsâr için mu'temed ü emîn kimseler nasb u ta'yîn iderler idi ki, ahvâl-i memleketi ve mühimmât-ı ra'ıyyeti pinhâni tecessüs ü tefahhus idüp makâm-ı hizmetde istikâmetle kıyâm u mevkıf-ı âlilerine 'arz u i'lâm ideler ki ... lâzım olan umûra sa'i ve merâsim-i devlet ü salatanâtu kemâ yenbagi mürâ'i olup dest-i tedârik-i dâmen telâfi-i taksirden kütah ve kasîr olmadın. Bünyâd-ı memleket ve esâs-ı ma'deide zâhir olan kusûr u haleli ve sitârı mi'mâr-ı teyakkuz u hibret ile termim ü ta'mir ve islâh-ı mesâlih-i cumhur ile esbâb-ı devlet ü şevketi teksîr ü tevfir ideler.*"

seditionous people. The fourth is *sâhib-i haber* (the head of intelligence) who collects information from the cities and villages and reports the condition of the elite and the common people.³⁴⁷ According to this principle, we see that the sultan should not be secluded. He should personally supervise the affairs of the state, and be aware of the situation of the subjects and the actions of officials, so that happiness would prevail.

All in all, a secluded sultan is not seen as legitimate. The sultan should be actively involved in the business of ruling to provide happiness for the people. In *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, it is explained through the sultans' being aware of the situation of their subjects. Corresponding to this idea, the example of Caliph Mansur is cited. Mansur states that he needs trustworthy people to be informed on the condition of the soldiers and villagers, and to gain reports about what happens in the empire. By appointing such informants, happiness would be preserved among the subjects.³⁴⁸

This theme of an active, not secluded, sultan is very dominant in Sâfi's *Zübde* as it is very essential for good government. Sâfi portrays Sultan Ahmed as an assertive ruler who personally deals with the business of ruling. In one of the anecdotes in *Zübde*, we see Ahmed's incognito inspection of the condition of the soldiers. Sâfi's informant Mustafa Pasha relates that when he was charged with the business of sending soldiers to Bursa, the sultan sent an imperial letter asking the situation of the soldiers from the pasha. Mustafa Pasha petitioned that he was standing at the port from morning until the evening and cautiously dealing with the soldiers' shipment. The sultan replied the pasha was not the only person standing at the port. Then, the pasha immediately realized that Ahmed I was controlling the business of sending the troops to Bursa by way of *tebdîl-i sûret* (changing appearance).³⁴⁹

Likewise, Sâfi tries to connect Ahmed's first journey to Edirne in 1605 with his preoccupation with acquiring direct knowledge and solving the problems of his subjects. Sâfi reports that not any of the Ottoman sultans came to this city from Selim II's time until Ahmed I.³⁵⁰ By saying this, Sâfi puts Ahmed I above his predecessors,

³⁴⁷ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Fatih, fols. 226b-227a.

³⁴⁸ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Peker, fol. 157a: "Bir muhbîr-i sâdıkdır ki, bunlarun ahvâl u a'mallerini ve umûr-ı 'asâkîr-i re'âyâ ve etrâf-ı memleketde olan bî-kazâyâ ... i'lâm u ebnâ ide. Elhak pâdişâhlar ki bu makûle kimseleri ele getürmeğe muvaffak olalar. Mesâlih-i enâmnda sedâd u salâh ve miyân-ı halkda esbâb-ı fevz ü felâh muhakkak olur."

³⁴⁹ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p.161.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., fol. p. 166: "Merhûm sultân Selîm Hân-ı Sâni'den berü pâdişâh- yüzün görmek ve cemâl-i bâ-kemâli müşâhedesi ile murâda irmek müyesser olmamagile ... tecellî-i cemâl devlet ü ikbâle pür-eşvâk olmuşlar."

and he emphasizes that Ahmed was interested in the happiness of his people as opposed to secluded sultans of earlier times. Sâfi reports on Ahmed I's Edirne trip to illustrate the sultan's interest in the situation of his subjects. According to the account, Ahmed went to Edirne in order to deal personally with the evildoers. He punished those who spread the oppression in and around the city.³⁵¹ Also, we know that hunting expeditions had a distinguishing place in the life of Ahmed I. Sâfi endeavors to show that these hunting trips had many important functions. Most importantly, it served the aim of sultan's observing the conditions of the subjects and directly acquiring knowledge from his subjects rather than asking informants.³⁵² By his struggle to prove that Ahmed's hunting trips were held not only for entertainment but also for good government, Sâfi Efendi gives a clue to Ahmed's endeavor to be seen as an active, not secluded, sultan.

Then *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* continues with explanation of other necessary behaviors to implement justice. An important sign of an ideal ruling is that the subjects should have direct access to the justice of the sultan. "The sultan should listen to the petitions of the oppressed; he should behave with mercy towards them and redress grievances."³⁵³ According to the story, an old woman came to Sultan Melikşah and petitioned that her orphan children were starving, because her cow was slaughtered and eaten by one of the sultan's men. Hearing the complaints of the woman, the sultan ordered the execution of the wrongdoer and gave seventy cows to the woman in place of the slaughtered one.³⁵⁴ True justice is strengthened with generosity and mercy towards the oppressed.

There is a similar anecdote in the preface of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. Hocazâde Abdülaziz reports about Ahmed I's care for the property of orphans. Ahmed I was informed that one of his officials acted tyrannically and dared to infringe the property of

³⁵¹ Ibid., p. 168: "Edrene ve etrâfında fesâd ü şenâ'at ve zülm ü üdvânî işâ'at iden eşkıyânın cezâların ve ef'âl-i şenî'a ve a'mâl-i kabîhaları mukâbelesinde sezâların virmişlerdir."

³⁵² Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. II, pp. 184-185: "Ve sâlisen ahvâl-i memleketi tefehhus ve etvar-ı ecnâs-ı ra'iyeti teccüss olub, aktâr-ı arzda sâkin ve etrâf-ı memâlikde mütemekkin olub, dest-i zulm ü 'udvânile azürde ve deste-çüb-i zaleme ile let-horde olan re'âyâ vü berâyâyâ ki, pây-ı that-ı Kostantîniyye'de ârz-ı ahvâl anlara nisbetile kemâl-i su'ûbet ü işkâl üzeredür... işbu dâru'n-nasr Edreneye gelüp her gün taşraları teşrif etmek ile...men'-i hâcib ü derbân, ve zecr-i bevâb-i bî-emân olmayub, şân-ı devlet-nişânları gün gibi 'ayan ve bedr-i tâbân gibi nümâyân olmagile 'arz-ı hâl-i pür-melâl etmelerini teshil ü tesyirdür."

³⁵³ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Altınpay, fol. 49b: "Tazallüm idenlerin şekvâsını istimâ'a himmet ve def'-i zulme ikdam ve mazlûmînün hâline merhamet ü şefkat itmek" and fol. 50b: "Zekâtı pâdişâhi ve cihân-dâri budur ki, bir mazlûm-ı dâd-hâh, sâye-i 'âtîfet-i pâdişâhiyi penâh idüp hengâm-ı 'arz-ı merâmde tazallm ile hâcetini pişgâh-ı hiyâm-ı 'izz ü ihtişâmına inhâ ü i'lam itdükte kelâmını gûş idüp mudârâ ve muvâsât ile mu'âmele" and fol. 50a: "Cenâb-ı Kirdgâr seni halk-ı 'âleme baş itdi, ağrısına dahi tahammül ü istibâr eyle."

³⁵⁴ Ibid., fols. 51b-53b.

orphans with the aim of increasing the resources of the treasury. The sultan immediately ordered the punishment of that official. He said that he never gives consent to such tyrannical actions. The treasury would not be prosperous by infringing the properties of orphans.³⁵⁵

We see corresponding anecdotes in *Zübde*. Sâfi reports a story by using Mustafa Pasha, who was the chief treasurer at that time, as his informant to show Ahmed's care for not including the properties of the orphans to the treasury. According to the account, when a man died, his property of 300,000 *akçes* were put into the treasury because the inheritors were absent at the time of their father's death. When the inheritors finally came and asked for their financial rights, the *defterdâr* (the chief treasurer) refused to return the whole sum because the inheritors had to give a part of the inheritance to the treasury according to the legacy. However, the sultan ignored the decision of his *defterdâr*, and gave all the money back to the legal inheritors. The sultan thought that the property of orphans would bring no benefit to the treasury.³⁵⁶ This story is told by Sâfi Efendi to show that Ahmed listened to the complaints of his subjects and showed mercy towards them; therefore, he is indeed generous, merciful, and just.

There must be a balance between mercy and punishment according to the theory of justice constructed in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*. On the one hand, there is a considerable emphasis on the punitive capacity of the ruler. Punishment is seen as necessary to implement justice. "The flourishing of the honor of the empire and the subjects (*mülk ü millet*)³⁵⁷ and goodness of the state and the religion would be possible through the punitive capacity (*siyâset*) of the ruler ... any right (*hakk*) can be preserved without the rules of the *shari'a* and the affairs of the religion and *shari'a* cannot be put in order without the controlling capacity of the punishment (*siyâset*).³⁵⁸ The story of the Tamgaç Han is cited to illustrate the subject. One day a man brought a banquet of roses to Tamgaç Han. The sultan asked the man where he had bought them. The man answered that he did not buy the roses, but he picked them from other people's gardens because

³⁵⁵ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* /Nuruosmaniye, fol. 14b.

³⁵⁶ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, pp. 33-34; Murphey, "Mustafa Sâfi's Version of the Kingly Virtues," p. 11.

³⁵⁷ Virginia Aksan translates the term "*mülk ü millet*" as "the honor of the empire and the nation," see Aksan, "Ottoman Political Writing 1768-1808," p. 54.

³⁵⁸ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Peker, fol. 148a: "*Mülk ü milletün zîb ü zîneti ve dîn ü devletün salâh u savleti siyâset ile kâ'im ü daîmdür ... Kâ'ide-i şerî'at-ı şerîfe üzre pür-hükümet-i der-kâr olmasa bir 'amel-i hakk merkezinde karâr bulmaz. Ve zabıta-i râbıta-i siyâset bî-i'tibâr olsa kâr-ı şer'-i din muhkem u muntazım olmaz.*"

the people would not care about it. The sultan said in response that if a person enters into the gardens of other people and picks up roses without taking permission, he might pick up fruits of the trees in the future. The sultan said that such evildoers should be punished to preserve the *mülk ü millet*. So the man was punished by cutting off his hand.³⁵⁹

On the other hand, the ruler should not exceed the limits of the *shari'a* when punishing someone. One of the significant principles of justice is to protect the rules of God (*ahkâm-ülâhiyyeyi muhâfaza*). The idea is strengthened with a verse from Qur'an; "Unquestionably, his is the judgment."³⁶⁰ If the ruler follow the orders of God and perform the worship, the subjects will follow the example of the ruler.³⁶¹ To illustrate the subject, the story of Amr b. Leys (d. 1496), who was successor of Ya'kub b. Leys who was the founder of Saffarid dynasty in Persia, is told. Having relied on the words of selfish, rancorous people (*sâhib-i garaz*), Amr b. Leys imprisoned a humble man who had not done anything wrong. The mother of the man came to the sultan and petitioned why her son was imprisoned although he did not commit any mistake. The sultan said in response that those who come against the laws of the sultan would be punished in this way. Then, mother replied what about the laws of God (*ahkâm-ı şerîfe-i ilâhîye*); how can you establish laws as whatever you like (without taking *ahkâm-ı şerîfe-i ilâhîye* into account)? Hearing the words of mother, the sultan showed mercy and forgave the man.³⁶²

We see that Mustafa Sâfi Efendi also tries to show such a balance between mercy and punishment in the actions of Ahmed I. In one of the anecdotes in *Zübde*, the sultan is portrayed as showing forgiveness towards a horse thief. Sâfi relates from Mustafa Pasha that when the horse thief was arrested, the sultan insisted the thief be punished with forced labor rather than with execution. Theft was a minor crime according to the principles of the *shari'a*; hence, capital punishment would be exceeding the limits of the *shari'a*. In another story, however, Ahmed I is seen very determinate in punishing those who oppressed his subjects to implement justice. When the inhabitants of Gebze came to the sultan and complained about the oppression of the

³⁵⁹ Ibid., fols. 149a-149b.

³⁶⁰ *Qur'an*, 6:62.

³⁶¹ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Altınpay*, fol. 53b.

³⁶² Ibid., fols. 54b-55a.

peasants and disturbance of the peace by an evildoer who had company with *Celâlis*, the sultan immediately ordered the execution of the evildoer to preserve the public good.³⁶³

Another behavior essential for justice is that the sultan should sincerely intend the well being of his people, because the intention of the sultan is influential. If the sultan wants justice to prevail, blessings will occur as a result; but if the intention of the sultan is tyranny, the crops will not be abundant.³⁶⁴ According to the theory constructed in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, the happiness of the subjects, a full treasury, the prosperity in villages and cities, and the strength and the longevity of the empire would be ensured by justice (*‘adl*). The result of tyranny (*zulm*) would be the destruction of order and the decline of the state.³⁶⁵ Correspondingly, Abdülaziz Efendi reports that the biggest desire, intention of Sultan Ahmed is to protect the empire (*himâyet-i bilâd*), to spread justice (*işâ ‘a-i merâsim-i ‘adl ü dâd*), and to stop disorders and sedition, so that the subjects will be happy.³⁶⁶

III.3.3. Sultanic Generosity

Similarly, Abdülaziz also inserts a passage on Ahmed I at the end of the section on generosity and graciousness (*sehâ ve ihsân*). This section is very much related to the previous one which is on charitable activities (*hayrât ve meberrât*) as it prepares a perfect ground to talk about sultanic generosity. By praising the benevolence of Ahmed I, Abdülaziz Efendi provides a reminder about all the charitable activities of Sultan Ahmed which proves how the sultan excelled in his acts of generosity.

It is well-known theme in “mirror for princes” genre that the ideal just sultan should act generously and kindly towards his subjects. “Showing generosity to people is the most virtuous quality to be gained, in that it enables one to be happy both in this world and hereafter. Generosity is a source of happiness in this world because it would

³⁶³ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, pp. 26-29; Murphey, “Mustafa Sâfi ’s Version of the Kingly Virtues,” p. 9

³⁶⁴ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî/Altınpay*, fol. 55b: “*Erkân-ı ‘adâletün biri dahi ra‘iyyet hakkında hulîs-ı niyet ve anlara bi-kadri’l-inkân nîk-endîş olmağa hüsn-i ‘azîmetdür. Zirâ bu husûsda pâdişâhlar niyyetünün eser-i mahsûsı musarrah u mansûsdur. Eger ‘adl ü dâda niyet iderler ise, müntic-i bereket ü cem‘iyyet olur. Eger ... hilâfına kasd ile zulm ü bî-dâda teveccüh gösterirler ise cümle mahsûlâtun bereket ü menfa‘ati berbâd ...olur.*”

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 58a: “*Netîce-i ‘adl bekâ-yı mülk ü millet ve vüs‘at-i memleket ve ma‘mûrî-i hazâ’in ve âbâdânî-i karye ve medâ’indür ve semere-i zulm zevâl-i devlet harâbi-i memâlik ve zuhûr-ı şürûr ve intikâl-i saltanatdur.*”

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 60a.

only be possible to guarantee the loyalty of the subjects by being generous towards them.”³⁶⁷

It is the duty of the rulers to build necessary infrastructure. It will bring glory in the hereafter that such charitable activities perpetuate the name of the founder even after his death.³⁶⁸ The construction of roads, building of bridges,³⁶⁹ mosques,³⁷⁰ *medreses*,³⁷¹ and helping the poor³⁷² are the services expected from the rulers.

After explaining the importance of being generous towards the subjects, the exceptional generosity of Hatim el-Tâi who was chief of the Arabian Tayy tribe in the seventh century is recorded.³⁷³ According to the story, the sultan of Yemen was so benevolent that both the rich and the poor could benefit from his generosity. However, the sultan did not like to hear any word on the graciousness of Hatim, whose kindness and magnanimity reached beyond the boundaries of his country. The sultan of the Yemen decided to kill Hatim. He found a strong young man and paid him for this duty. On the way to the tribe of Tai, the young man was hosted by a very kind man. The house owner asked the young man about the purpose of his journey. Very impressed by the generosity and kindness of the house owner, the young man relied on his secrecy and talked about his aim of killing Hatim. Hearing the intention of his guest, the house owner said: “I am Hatim. If you need my head, I would give it because you are my guest. It is a pleasure for me to fulfill the wishes of my guests.” Hearing Hatim’s words, the young man deeply regretted his behavior and asked for forgiveness.

After giving this very impressive story, Abdülaziz adds a part and a long poem on the generosity of Ahmed I. Abdülaziz likens the generosity and charitable disposition of Ahmed I to that of Hatim. Hatim rewards someone who does not deserve to be rewarded because of his bad actions. Abdülaziz tries to remind the reader of this quality in the sultan by likening the high generosity of Sultan Ahmed to that of Hatim.

³⁶⁷ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedi*/Peker, fols. 81a-82a: “*Amme-i enâma husûsan eşrâf-ı kirâma cûd u sehâ ve ihsân u ‘atâdan ulu bir sıfat olmaz ... Aristodan istifâr idüp sebab-i sa‘âdet-i dünyâ ve ahret nedür? diyücek hakim dâna: ‘Cûd u kerem u sehâdur.’ dedi. ... Sa‘âdet-i dünyâ olmasına bâ’is budur ki: El-insân ‘abîdü’l-ihsân mazmûnunca rakabe-i halkı cûd u sehâ ile ribka-i ‘ubûdiyyete kayd ... kerem ve ihsân ile ... kâbildir... meslek-i cûd u sehâya sâlik olmağla bir niçe tâifenün rikâbına mâlik ola.*”

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 76a.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 79b.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, fols. 77a-78b.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 78b.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, fol. 79a.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, fols. 88a-92b.

According to Abdülaziz Efendi, Ahmed clearly surpasses Hatim by his generosity. In Ahmed I's time, the poverty and grievances are gone. His generosity is so abundant that his charitable activities removed the evils of poverty and brought the happiness of wealth and prosperity.³⁷⁴ It is a well-known theme in "mirror for princes" genre that generosity is the essential prerequisite for effective and just rule. The sultan has the responsibility of caring for his people. The sultan should be generous especially towards the poor and vulnerable subjects. In this sense, Hocaşâde Abdülaziz portrays the reign of Ahmed I as a period of prosperity and happiness. Abdülaziz Efendi probably tries to fashion such an image for the sultan by highlighting his exceptional acts of generosity and drives a portrait of an empire in which the subjects live in prosperity and happiness. Also, this theme of a prosperous empire suits well the aim of Ahmed I to create an empire more prosperous than the empire of his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman.³⁷⁵

Likewise, Mustafa Sâfi relates stories portraying Ahmed's high generosity and acts of kindness. As mentioned in the second chapter of this study, Ahmed showed his generosity at every opportunity. He frequently ordered the preparation of substantial meals for the needy. To illustrate, as discussed in the second chapter, such occasions were held during the opening ceremony of Sultan Ahmed Mosque³⁷⁶ and wedding ceremonies of the sultan's daughters. Moreover, the sultan showed great effort to improve the living conditions of the subjects by his charitable acts. For instance, Ahmed ordered the completion of a bridge whose construction began at the time of Sultan Süleyman. Also, the sultan constructed fountains to solve the problems caused by water shortages.³⁷⁷

In another story, Ahmed is seen on a boat trip between Üsküdar and Eminönü. The Sultan has a conversation with the owner of the boat who is a *zimmî* (a non-Muslim subject). Ahmed invites him to convert to Islam. Although the man does not accept the invitation, Ahmed rewards him with gold coins at the end of the trip. The owner of the boat is surprised by the high generosity of the passenger. He immediately understands

³⁷⁴ Ibid., fol. 93b: "*Hâtîm-i Tâî nâmını tayy eyledi // Mürde-i fakr u gamı tayy eyledi //... // Ve hakân-ı sûtüde evsâfun // 'Atâyâ-yı cezîlesi saçdu bî-şumar ve âsâr-ı cûd u sehâsı // Dâfi '-i şürur-ı fakr u i'sâr ve câlib-i sürur-ı gınâ u yesârdur.*"

³⁷⁵ Avcıoğlu, "Ahmed I and Allegories of Tyranny," p. 218.

³⁷⁶ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, pp. 103-105.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 125-126.

that this was not only a rich man but also a man with noble spirit.³⁷⁸ Also, Mustafa Sâfi reports that Ahmed I rewarded his successful men by giving richly ornamented robes of honor (*hul'at*) and by filling their hoods (*üsküf*) with gold. Sâfi gives his own experience as an example: when he completed one year in his service, the sultan rewarded his personal preacher with three *hul'ats* and 200.000 akçes (*iki yük akçe*).³⁷⁹

In any case, charity is an important way of good administration and implementing justice. In return, it secures the subjects' loyalty and construction of political legitimacy. Acts of generosity show the personal care of the sultan for the welfare and happiness of his subjects.

III.3.4. Sultanic Bravery

Abdülaziz Efendi adds verses to praise Ahmed I and prose to pray for the continuity of his rule and victories at the end of this section on bravery. According to Abdülaziz Efendi, Ahmed I is the possessor of the victorious sword, he is the guarantee of the state and the religion. His victorious soldiers fight like a shining fire; they show resolution in the battlefield and they remain determined in bravery and courage.³⁸⁰ It is evident that Abdülaziz Efendi portrays the sultan as the victorious ruler of the empire who fights adamantly in the name of Islam. As discussed in detail in the second chapter, Ahmed I had a desire to personally lead a campaign. He wanted to be portrayed as a true warrior sultan just like his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman. To this end, Abdülaziz Efendi constructed an image of a warrior sultan fighting in the name of Islam in his *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*.

Bravery is an illustrious virtue that both God and the people love. This idea is strengthened by a saying attributed to the prophet; "my livelihood is under the shadow of my sword."³⁸¹ Then stories on the bravery of Halid b. Velid and 'Alî who are the companions of the prophet are cited. Ali was so brave and courageous that he fearlessly fought against the enemies. Even if the number of the enemy were high, he would attack violently without any fear. When people asked him how he struck out at the enemy without showing any sign of fear, he replied that there is no escape when death comes,

³⁷⁸ Ibid., fol. 99a; Murphey, "Mustafa Sâfi 's Version of the Kingly Virtues," p. 16.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 101.

³⁸⁰ *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*/Peker, fol. 139a: "Tığ-i nusret-güsterîdür zâmin-i din ü devlet. Ve 'asâkîr-i nusret mü'essirleri ... âteş-i firûzân gibi hamleler izhâr idüp meydân-ı cengde sebât u direng ile ... pâyidâr ve 'arsa-i şecâ'at ve şehâmetde sâbit ve ber-karâr olurlar."

³⁸¹ Ibid., fol. 128a.

so there is no reason to be afraid.³⁸² Then, the prose continues with the tale of Alexander the Great. When some people asked Alexander the Great about the distinctive signs of bravery, he replied that the important thing is not to learn the number of the soldiers, but to learn the condition of the enemy.³⁸³ Even if your soldiers are superior in numbers, it is necessary to take every precautionary measure.³⁸⁴ Another virtuous behavior is that a sultan should go into battle at the head of his army, so that he can counterbalance the problems caused by the frustration of the soldiers and prevent possible disorders in the army.³⁸⁵ Indeed, the purpose of the war should be the pure good (*hayr-ı mahz*), triumph of the faith and repelling the oppression and sedition.

Corresponding stories are reported by Sâfi Efendi with an endeavor to show how Ahmed I was very brave. One such story is on the Bursa campaign of Ahmed I. In 1605, the sultan led the Bursa campaign at the head of his army to stop the oppressions and sedition caused by the *Celâlis*. During the campaign, he inspected the enemy by entering into their tents by way of *tebdîl-i sûret*. According to the account, Ahmed and one of his trusted men changed their appearances and went outside. They toured in the city center, checked the bazaar and went outside of the city following the village road. They reached the tents of the enemy and Ahmed I attentively inspected and learnt the situation of the enemy.³⁸⁶ Sâfi says that this story shows Ahmed I's courage, and he praises the sultan for his outstanding bravery. Ahmed's hunting expeditions are also related to his bravery and his desire to personally lead campaigns. According to Sâfi, one of the beneficial effects of hunting trips is to strike fear in the hearts of the enemy by appearing near the frontiers.³⁸⁷

III.4. Conclusion

To conclude, Ahmed was 19 years old by the end of 1609. He was still young; but he was now an experienced ruler. Also, he took a personal hold on the business of

³⁸² Ibid., fols. 130a-130b.

³⁸³ Ibid., fol. 134b: “*Pâdişâhlarda nişâne-i dilîri ve âlâmet-i küşver-gîri nedür? didüklerinde, kemiyet ü keyfiyet düşmenden istihbâr etmeyüp belki ne mahal dedür diyü istifsâr ... itmektür.*”

³⁸⁴ Ibid., fol. 136a: “*‘Âkil ü kâmil kâr-ı düşmenden zinhar âkıl ve killetine mağrur olup tedbîrden zâhil olma.*”

³⁸⁵ Ibid., fol. 137a.

³⁸⁶ Sâfi, *Zübde*, vol. I, p. 176.

³⁸⁷ Murphey, “Mustafa Sâfi ’s Version of the Kingly Virtues,” p. 10.

ruling.³⁸⁸ Therefore, he found a stable ground to achieve his life-long endeavor to present a virtuous character imitating that of his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman. He and his patronage brokers sponsored books revealing the good moral character of the sultan to achieve this end. As can be seen from the themes and anecdotes on the virtues of ideal sultans covered in this chapter, we can conclude that it was a morality play and books of ethics written in the name of Ahmed I, such as *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* and *Zübdetü't-Tevârih*, were important tools in this play, portraying the sultan as the champion of the faith, the persecutor of the wrong doers, restorer of the order, protector of the poor from the pressure of the powerful. All in all, such books helped Ahmed I in his endeavor to strengthen his image as an ideal sultan. In this vein, I have firstly scrutinized the preface of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* in a detailed way to uncover the political discourses found in the invocation of God and praise of the prophet, four caliphs and the sultan. I have tried to read the underlining meaning behind the conventional language of the preface section to reveal the purpose of the translation which, as explained throughout this chapter, was to portray Ahmed I as a just, pious, brave, and generous ruler working for the happiness of his subjects. We have seen that the aim behind producing such a translation was to fashion a powerful sultanic image for Ahmed I. Also, I have scrutinized the main themes, stories and anecdotes cited in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* so as to understand how the kingly virtues of Ahmed I were constructed by Abdülaziz Efendi in his translation. Besides, we have seen how the arguments put forward in the preface section permeated through the whole text. Moreover, I have compared the themes on the sultanic virtues of Ahmed I with the themes on Ahmed I's moral qualities constructed by Sâfî Efendi in his *Zübdetü't-Tevârih*. Such a methodology allowed us to comprehend that these books were commissioned as part of the same political and intellectual agenda.

³⁸⁸ Börekeçi, "Factions and Favorites," p. 249.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has offered a literary-historical analysis of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî*, an early seventeenth-century Ottoman treatise on ethics prepared for Sultan Ahmed I by one of the most prominent *ulema* figures of the period, Hocaşâde Abdülaziz Efendi. This book on ethics stands at the crossroad of several perspectives including the political, social, intellectual, and cultural context of its time. A study based on the literary historical analyses of such a book on ethics requires taking each dimension into account. Therefore, I have tried to study this text in view of its author, including his social status and the social group he represents. Also, I have searched for evidence about the author and the patrons as well as the political, social and intellectual trends in the contemporary scene. Moreover, I have tried to reconstruct the historical context of the reasons for its production to be able to read its political, social and cultural meaning, as Rıfaat Abou-El-Haj suggested.³⁸⁹ Such a methodology helps better contextualize the text in the light of the political, social, and intellectual climate of its period.

The political, economic, military and social transformations that took place in the post-Süleymanic period have been interpreted by conventional historiography on the early modern Ottoman Empire as representing an “inevitable decline.” Declinist scholars analyzed this period as one of deterioration and decline by exploiting political treatises written by contemporary intellectuals. These accounts, namely *nasihatnâmes* or mirrors for princes, were used as unquestionable sources of information proving the decline of political, economic, and social institutions. Declinist historians mostly studied such political treatises without paying critical attention to their political, social, and intellectual contexts as well as the socio-political position of each author.

This study is influenced by works of modern historians who made seminal studies on Ottoman history by relying on a corpus of texts; such as Cornell Fleischer’s important study of an Ottoman bureaucrat and intellectual Mustafa Âlî. Also, it is influenced by Douglas Howard’s leading article on the Ottoman decline literature and most importantly Rıfaat Abou-El-Haj’s “*Formation of the Modern World*” and his other important articles on *nasihatnâme* literature. Following the methodology used by these leading scholars, this thesis basically claims that such political treatises could reveal political, intellectual, and social discourses of the period in which they were written, and suggests that the production of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* should be understood as part

³⁸⁹ Rıfaat Abou-El-Haj, “Fitnah, Huruc Ala al-Sultan and Nasihat,” p. 191.

of a much larger political agenda carried out by Ahmed I, who tried hard to present his reign and rule as a recovery from the turbulent years of wars and rebellions that followed the late 1590s.

Consistent with this methodology, the first chapter has sought to provide a meaningful portrait of Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi in relation to the social, political and intellectual realities of the period he lived in. Toward this end, Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi and his brothers' lives, professional careers, political expectations, patronage ties as well as factional positions were scrutinized in order to elucidate the historical context within which *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was produced.

The second chapter unpacked the historical context within which *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was written. The first part of the chapter focused on the personality of Sultan Ahmed I and his endeavors to imitate the achievements of his great-grandfather Sultan Süleyman, so as to see the cultural, intellectual, and political concerns that were prevalent in the court of Ahmed I. The second part has sought to examine the patronage activities of Ahmed I's favorite advisor, El-Hac Mustafa Agha, and the latter's relationship with Hocazâde Abdülaziz, who was likewise interested in manuscript production. In the third part, the books commissioned by Ahmed I or by the courtiers for the sultan were examined to have a better sense of the ideological functions lying behind the production of these books.

The main aim of the third chapter was a close reading of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* with respect to the question of how a book on ethics helped Sultan Ahmed to create and strengthen his sultanic image as "a second Süleyman." In general, it attempted to uncover the contemporary discourses on kingly virtues of Ahmed I as they are constructed and propagated in his book by Abdülaziz Efendi as well as by other books commissioned by the sultan in a similar context. The first part concentrated on the preface section of the book to uncover the reasons behind the translation and authorial intentions of Abdülaziz Efendi. Then, the contents of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was compared with two other contemporary books, *Zübdetü't-Tevârih* and *Mir'âtü'l-Ahlâk* which were written around the same time in the name of Sultan Ahmed in order to have a nuanced understanding of how these books, which talked about the characteristics of ideal sultans and promulgated the exceptional moral character of Sultan Ahmed. Finally, the stories and anecdotes cited in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* were examined in detail to uncover the arguments on the kingly virtues of Ahmed I as constructed by Abdülaziz Efendi. Also, the content of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* was

compared with the themes on Ahmed I's kingly virtues as constructed by Safi Efendi in his *Zübdetü't-Tevârih* to see the reflections of the anecdotes cited in *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* in the life of Ahmed I and to understand how these books on ethics, commissioned by the sultan and his patronage brokers, were part of the same political, cultural, and intellectual agenda.

Undeniably, there are some points which have been either incompletely examined or cannot be touched upon in this study. First of all, information regarding the biography of Abdülaziz Efendi and his family is based on the use of biographic dictionaries, and contemporary chronicles. An examination of archival sources could provide more detailed information regarding the careers and political connections of the Hocazâde family. The Hocazâdes, being one of the most influential *ulema* dynasties of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, still await the interest of historians. Without mirroring the full picture of Hocazâde Abdülaziz Efendi and without examining all of his literary productions, an interpretation of *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* is bound to remain incomplete. Secondly, *Ahlâk-ı Sultân Ahmedî* is a work translated from its Persian original, *Ahlâk-ı Muhsinî*. Therefore, a comparative literary analysis with its Persian original is essential for a better understanding of the authorial intentions and strategies of Abdülaziz Efendi as well as the discursive preferences of his era.

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