

II.MAKALE: Nejdet (Necdet) Gök

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**The European travelegue of Sultan Abdülaziz
Summarized from
Halimi Efendi's Notes ¹**

The principal purposes of the Caliph Sultan Abdulaziz, the Shah of the Shahs, in undertaking this journey, were to increase the glory and fame of the Empire; to strengthen the existing friendly relations between the major powers of this period and Ottoman State; and to see for himself the advanced systems of government and social structures of the highly civilised European nations so as to enable his own people to attain the same affluence and prosperity.

This was why the invitation which was extended by the Emparor of France, Napoleon III, on the occasion of the exhibition that was to be held in Paris in 1867, was accepted by the Sultan, which greatly pleased the Emparor. A special steamer was immediately put at the disposal of the French Ambassador in Istanbul, Mosye Bourée, to enable him to accompany the Sultan. In addition some ships of the French navy were sent to lie offshore at Çanakkale in order to meet Sultan Abdülaziz and his entourage. So on Friday, the 18th day of the month of Safer (the second month of the Arabic lunar year), after performing the Friday Prayer in Ortakoy Mosque, His Majesty the Padishah honoured with his prosence his steamer named Sultaniye off Besiktas Palace. At about eight o'clock the same evening, to the firing of cannon, celebrations, offical ceremonies, renderings of "My Padishah Forever" and prayers, the requisite protocol duties were performed with the attendance of ministers, foreign mission and distinguished statesmen on the shores of the islands (presumably the Princes' Isles).

On the evening of this happy day, as a gift of Almighty God in honour of the Sultan, the weather was very good and suitable for sailing. Together with the steamer Pertev Piyale carrying the Padishah and his entourage and the steamer on which the French Ambassador was traveling, we passed the coast of Marmara Island during the night in peace and rest. On the next day, Saturday we reached the Dardanelles.

in the Dardanelles

As we were passing the Sultaniye Citadel, which had been built with the best facilities and techniques of the age, cannon and other guns were fired in the appropriate number from every piece of armour. We arrived at the Sultaniye

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Citadel to the applause and prayers of the soldiers and of the pupils of the schools of the region. Because the ships sent by France were already there, the French officials and soldiers on these ships attended the ceremony, applauding and cheering.

Demonstrations of joy continued throughout the day on land and sea to the firing of cannon. Sultan Abdülaziz stayed there for a few hours to please both the soldiers and the public. In the meantime he received the French Ambassador and officers and sailors from the French naval contingent and gave them decorations and medals. We set out again on the same day, passed Sakız (modern Lesbos) and Midilli (modern Chios) on Sunday; and passed along the Greek coast on Monday. On Tuesday, we passed the volcano of Etna in Sicily and reached the harbour of the city of Messina at six o'clock on the same day. The Sultan was welcomed there with a ceremony including the firing of cannon. The Padishah transferred from the steamer Sultaniye to the Pertev. We spent the night there and set out again on Wednesday.

In Italy

On Thursday we arrived in Italian waters. An armoured ship and three frigates of the Italian navy welcomed Sultan Abdulaziz and his entourage and the whole flotilla arrived in Naples the next morning. They rested there for some time and Italian admirals and other officers were received by the Sultan in the company of the Ambassador at Florence, Rustem Bey. The Sultan complimented them and gave an Ottoman decoration and medal to the Ambassador. On the same day, the group left from Naples, was accompanied by ships of the Italian navy along the coast of Italy (including Rome), and passed the islands of Sardinia and Corsica at about five o'clock.

In France

We arrived at The Toulon dockyard on Saturday. There a grandiose welcoming ceremony had been arranged for their having arrived in France safe and sound with the help of God. All around the harbour, both on the sea and on land, there were fantastic decorations. At the welcoming ceremonies the people of the city were joined by soldiers and statesmen.

When His Majesty the Padishah went ashore to the city he was accompanied by many decorated and colourful boats. Celebrations and spectacles that had not been witnessed hitherto were performed to the firing of cannon and rifles from the ships and various points.

We went in carriages to a mansion at the end of a lavishly decorated and boarded the train for Marseilles, where we arrived the same evening and then, after dinner, boarded the train for Paris, where we arrived at around three o'clock the next day. In the sumptuously decorated railway station the Emperor of France, with high-ranking officers and a military band, welcomed the padishah and then escorted the Padishah with his entourage in a procession of ceremonial carriages which were standing ready to his residence at the Palais des Tuileries. Sultan Abdülaziz, who there met the Empress, was later taken to the Elysée Palace, which had been prepared as his residence.

It had been previously arranged that the next day, Monday, they would go to the World Fair housed in a glass pavillion and give presents and medals to artisans and technologists who had produced new inventions. Padishah and Emperor went to the Fair in the carriage of Louis, one of the former kings of France, and then returned to the palace. The Emperor had planned to hold great receptions and ceremonies in the Padishah's honour, but then came the news of the death of Napoleon's protégé, Emperor Maximilian of Mexico (brother of the Austrian Emperor), at the hands of his enemies (after the failure of the French intervention aimed at founding a Catholic Empire in Mexico) The Emperor and his entourage were much affected by this incident (Maximillian's wife had gone mad with fears about her husband, who was shot) and for reason the ceremonies were abandoned.

Later, a great feast was given in the Emperor's palace. On the other days, we visited places of significance and, after a stay of eleven days, on Wednesday, 3rd July, at about eight o'clock, we left Paris by train, and passing through France by night, and reached Boulogne, a coastal town facing the English coast.

In England

After spending the night in Boulogne we crossed to Dover, where again ceremonies took place. Here as an indication of the respect due to the Padishah and those with him, every part of the harbour was decorated. As the representative of the Queen, her eldest son, Prince Albert, accomoanied by senior statesmen and officers, welcomed the Padishah and his entourage and gave a feast in venue near the coast. Then, we set out for London by train. Observing the scenery with great interest, and arrived in London at about ten o'clock the same evening. From the station accompanied by processions we went to the Queen's residence., Buckingham Palace which had been assigned to the Sultan. After spending the night there we went next day (Saturday) by carriages and train to the palace where the Queen was staying (undoubtedly Windsor). After the Sultan had ameeting with the Queen, she gave a great feast for him and his entourage.Later we returned to Buckingham Palace.

As Sunday was a holiday and most people satayed in their homes, the padishah and his entourage visited some places (such as a palace) (was this possibly Hampton Court?) and drove through the Queen's park to reach the River Thames. They toured the area of Richmond in carriages assigned to them, returning to the Palace in the evening. The next day they undertook further visits including vast shipyards. At six o'clock in the evening, a great concert was given in the Padishah's honour at the Crystal Palace. On Wednesday at half past seven the Sultan went by train to the famous Portsmouth dockyard. There he met the Queen on her royal yacht named Victoria and Albert. Then he inspected the Royal Navy and he his entourage were saluted with the firing of cannon from the ships. The Queen herself pinned the Order of the Garter, the most illustrious award in Britain and given only to sovereigns (Not strictly accurate. The Order is restricted to 25 knights and members of the royal family and foreign royalties.), on the Sultan's chest.

The Padishah later attended a reception given by the Mayor of London accepted and received some of the Company. On Friday, we had an excursion on the River Thames River and then returned to London, where we visited such places as merchant ships and areas where banks and post offices. The same evening we groced the dinner given by the Duke of Cambridge. The Sultan and his entourage after the dinner attended a ball organised by the Office of Eastern Foreign Administration of India. (This is the author's translation. Probably what was meant was the India Office or the Government of India. The title suggests the East India Company, but this had been wound up after the crown assumed the government of India on 1 November 1858). Next day they watched a military parade just outside London, where another great feast was given in the Sultan's honour. After resting on Sunday, we visited a sitting of Parliament on Monday.

Afterwards, we visited the Queen's theatre (presumably the Queen's Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue). Finally, after eleven days in London, accompanied by processions we travelled back to Dover harbour, first by carriage and then by train. After crossing the Channel to France we set out for Vienne by train and reached the Belgian frontier at the time of evening prayer.

In Belgium

At dawn the King of Belgium with soldiers and statesmen led a welcoming ceremony. Sultan Abdulaziz attended a feast given in his honour and then continued towards Prussia.

In Prussia

Next day towards dawn we reached Prussian territory and a formal meeting took place with the King and Queen of Prussia. (this is at variance with the author's earlier article (see TAS Review, No.!, pp 33-37), which states that the Sultan was invited by Bismarck to meet the King and Queen of Prussia but sent his apologies) The King with his senior officers welcomed the Sultan and in the evening gave a feast in his palace. After dinner we had a trip on the River Don, and took part in various ceremonies during the evening. When we returned to the palace later another feast was given. The King and Queen showed the appropriate hospitality and respect and saw their guests off next day. We arrived at Bavaria the same day and spent the night there.

In Austria

Next day, we left Bavaria and arrived in Austria. Towards eleven o'clock we arrived at Vienna station where the Emperor of Austria welcomed Sultan Abdulaziz there and formal introductions took place. Later the Emperor took his guest to the in a procession of carriages, allocating most parts of the palace to the Sultan and his entourage. The Emperor showed the appropriate hospitality and gave a dinner in the Sultan's honour in the evening.

The next day we went to the palace of Schönburnn outside Vienna and a dinner was given in the Sultan's honour. After strolling in the garden and grounds of the palace we returned to Vienna by train. Next evening the ambassadors of the major powers, and the following evening Austrian ministers and important

officials, were received by the Padishah. That same evening a ceremony and a feast were organized outside Vienna. On the remaining days we toured places of importance. The Emperor of Austria was host to the Sultan for five days, during which time he always showed due hospitality and respect. On the Wednesday morning the Sultan, who left the palace in a procession of carriages, arrived at the port of Preři (presumably Presburg, modern Bratislava) on the River Danube (Tuna), boarded the waiting steamer, and reached Budapest at about two o'clock at night.

Budapest

We spent the night in Pest and then attended a feast prepared by the Hungarians in the royal palace at about five o'clock in the morning. After some important statesmen and representatives of the people of the region had been received by the Sultan, he toured some neighbourhoods of the city, then returned to the steamer and set off again at about eight o'clock. At one o'clock, we were off the port of Ocek (modern Osijek, Croatia). Where we had to spend the stop and spend the night in the harbour because of the storm that came up. Next day, Saturday, at four o'clock we transferred to a smaller steamer, which was standard practice at this point, and left at half past five.

In Vidin (Bulgaria)

At two o'clock at night we arrived at the Citadel of Vidin and spent the next night in the mansion which had been prepared. Various celebrations and ceremonies were organized for the Saturday evening.

Ruscuk (modern Ruse)

On Sunday at twelve o'clock we set out from Vidin and arrived at the city of Ruscuk at midnight. The Padishah spent the night in the mansion prepared for him. Next day, Monday, he received Prince Charles of Flak and Bogdan and eminent statesmen and then gave some awards. We spent the night there.

Return to Istanbul via Varna

The next day, Tuesday, we arrived at Varna and after spending some time there we boarded the Padishah's steamer, Sultaniye, which arrived off Varna around evening. On Wednesday we reached the Bosphorus' lighthouses. Sultan Abdülaziz and his entourage were saluted with firing of cannon from the citadels and with lavish ceremonies, and demonstrations of respect and affection were shown. Because it had been telegraphed to Istanbul that the Sultan would honour Istanbul that day, all his ministers, officers, servants, ambassadors of the major powers, heads of state or representatives of other countries, teachers, and students of a host of schools welcomed the padishah from steamers on this significant day. The shores of the Bosphorus, Istanbul and Üsküdar were full of crowds. To the strains of "My Padishah Forever" and the prayers of soldiers and students on the shore, to a rolling barrage of infantry fire and the firing of rifle and cannon from Ottoman and foreign ships, and to ceremonies and celebrations, Sultan Abdulaziz's steamer hove to in

front of Beşiktaş Palace. Afterwards, the Sultan honoured Besiktas Palace with seven double boats. Because his return was a source of happiness among all the statesmen and the people, the whole of the city was illuminated with lanterns and the celebrations lasted for there days and nights.