

The Legacy of the *Waqf* Institution in Kosovo during the Period of Sultan Abdulhamid II

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Abstract

This article explores the history of the establishment of Ottoman *waqf* institutions in Kosovo, with specific emphasis on the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II. Through the analysis of primary sources from the Ottoman Archive in Istanbul and the General Directorate of Foundations Archive in Ankara, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the *awqaf* established by Sultan Abdulhamid II himself, statesmen and the common people known as *reaya*. The research found that while the first *waqf* institutions in Kosovo were established by sultans and were large complexes known as *külliye*, later in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were established more by the people of the region and were usually small places of worship and other *waqf* institutions that provided material income such as shops and monetary foundations. The implications of these findings shed light on the role of *waqf* in the development of Kosovo's social and economic structures during the late Ottoman period.

Keywords: *Waqf* Endowments, Kosovo, Sultan Abdulhamid II, Albanians.

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of the Ottomans in the Balkans brought significant cultural, religious, and institutional changes. One of the notable aspects was the introduction of Islam and the establishment of Islamic institutions, including the *waqf*. The word *waqf*¹ (pl. *awqaf*), which is an Arabic word meaning “to hold”, refers to a charitable act where a property is permanently allocated by its owner to a religious, social, or charitable cause (Günay 2012 vol. 42: 475). It is one of the most significant institutions that formed the foundation of Islamic civilization. The *waqf* has had a profound impact on individuals, not just in terms of religion, but also in social and cultural aspects. Its concept has been deeply intertwined with the religious and social life of Muslims for centuries. It involves the setting aside of property for the purpose of helping people, constructing a mosque, school, bridge, road, hostel, hospital, and even in creating income-generating *awqaf* such as stores and monetary foundations.

Historically, *waqf* institutions have played a critical role in providing essential services to citizens. In fact, nearly all the services that are now under state authority were once

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¹ Throughout my studies, I have noticed that the word “*waqf*” appears in different forms in academic papers written in English and other languages. As a result, in order to provide the best explanation possible in this paper, we shall use the term “*waqf*” alongside the phrases “endowment” and “foundation”.

carried out through *waqf* institutions. *Waqf* endowments were used to finance the construction and maintenance of mosques, *madrasas* (Islamic schools), hospitals, public baths, and other public facilities. They also funded scholarships for students, supported religious scholars, and provided for the poor and needy. This shows how these institutions were intimately involved in the daily lives of the population. The establishment of *awqaf* not only contributed to the development of Islamic infrastructure but also fostered a sense of community and social cohesion among the Muslim population in the Balkans. These endowments acted as important centers of religious and educational activities, enabling the dissemination of Islamic teachings and the preservation of cultural traditions.

Awqaf exhibit a dual nature, serving as integral components of Islamic civilization. On one hand, there are *awqaf* that provide services, which encompass institutions like mosques, schools, hospitals, delivering essential services to the community. On the other hand there are *awqaf* that generate revenue, including shops, markets, monetary foundations, mills, through rent, interest, or production. This income is channeled to support the *waqfs* providing services, ensuring their financial sustainability and continued ability to cater to the community's needs. According to Muhammad Mufaku, a distinguished figure in historical studies, a *waqf* should be considered acceptable and legitimate (*saheeh*) only when it encompasses two distinct components: assets designed to offer free services to the community, alongside those generating income to sustain the operations of the former (Mufaku 2015: 261). Together, these two categories of *awqaf* create a dynamic system that addresses both the spiritual and material requirements of society, preserving cultural traditions and fostering social bonds.

The concept of *waqf* in Islam finds its roots in the teachings of the Quran, which, although not explicitly mentioning the term “*waqf*” draws inspiration from verses emphasizing principles of charity and benevolence. The Quran underscores the responsibility of Muslims to contribute to the welfare of society, proclaiming, “Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend – indeed, Allah is knowing of it” (Qur’an, 3:92). This verse encourages the act of giving selflessly for the greater good, a sentiment that aligns with the ethos of *waqf*. Additionally, the Quran further emphasizes cooperation in righteousness and piety, stating, “...And cooperate in righteousness and piety...” (Quran, 5:2). These verses not only lay the foundation for the principles guiding *waqf* but also indirectly stimulate individuals to establish charitable endowments as a means of fulfilling their duty towards society and attaining the divine good. Even hadiths, the sayings and actions of the Prophet, address the concept of *awqaf*, emphasizing the importance of charitable endowments and community support. Guided by these teachings, the companions of the Prophet established the first *awqaf* known in Islam. The pioneering figure in this regard was Umar ibn al-Khattab, who later became the second leader of the Islamic state after the death of the Prophet. He dedicated a property with palm trees in the city of Medina as a *waqf*, and he appointed himself as the guardian (*muteveli*) of the *waqf* (Mufaku 2015: 260).

Following the establishment of *awqaf* by the companions of the Prophet in the early Islamic period, this noble tradition found its way to various regions with the expansion of the Islamic empires. Notably, the Ottoman Empire played a crucial role in the spread and development of *awqaf* across the Islamic world. As the Ottomans expanded their territories into the Balkans, they brought with them the practice of *waqf* endowments. The Ottoman rulers and elites actively promoted the establishment of *awqaf* as a means of supporting religious, educational, and social institutions. This facilitated the settlement policy of the

Ottomans and ensuring the spread of Islam in the conquered areas, it also integrated *awqaf* into the fabric of Balkan societies, contributing to the development and welfare of local communities (Kazıcı 2014: 83).

In understanding the diverse motivations behind *waqf* establishments, it becomes evident that these endowments are not solely driven by the desire to draw closer to God, even though that remains the primary motivation. While the spiritual aspect remains paramount, 'hidden' reasons exist, particularly those aimed at family benefits. Therefore, *awqaf* can be categorized into three distinct types: Charitable *awqaf*, known as "*waqf khayri*", are established to address societal needs and contribute to public welfare. Family *awqaf*, or "*waqf ahli*", focus on providing ongoing support to specific individuals or families, securing their welfare over time. In Turkish literature, a unique category known as "*Yarı Ailevi Vakıf*" or "*Half Family Waqf*" represents a hybrid form, balancing familial concerns with a commitment to social responsibility. Assets dedicated to this type of *waqf* serve both family members and broader community causes, reflecting a harmonious integration of familial and charitable objectives (Yediyıldız 2003: 9-10).

The intricate relationship between familial and charitable objectives within *waqf* establishments finds historical roots in the Ottoman Empire. Large expanses of land were converted into *waqf* status despite the state's assertion that it owned ninety percent of cultivable land. Koçi Bey, closely observing this situation in the early seventeenth century, claimed that certain individuals found ways to convert state lands into their private properties. These individuals, often close to the Sultan, leveraged their privileged positions to transform these lands into family *awqaf* (*waqf ahli*). Koçi Bey proposed a comprehensive examination of all *awqaf* established over the past two centuries, suggesting that legitimate ones would be untouched, while those with questionable legitimacy, referred to as '*zeamet*' (lands acquired during the conquest in the Ottoman Empire), would be redistributed for cultivation. The dynamics of the Ottoman Empire's approach towards *awqaf* underwent a significant shift during the Tanzimat period in the 1830s. The centralization of power marked by the establishment of the Ministry of *Awqaf* led to increased state intervention in *waqf* affairs. The ministry's formation aimed to address suspicions regarding the honesty of *waqf* revenues under the control of trustees. However, the centralization, despite its intention for better financial oversight, faced challenges, with *Awqaf* minister Musa Safveti Paşa admitting the difficulty of estimating *waqf* revenues. This failure led to a broader examination of regional *waqf* administrations in 1868, revealing a general accusation against *Awqaf* Ministry management (Çizakça 2017: 81-88).

The historical development of *waqf* establishments in the Ottoman Empire, marked by the conversion of state lands into family *awqaf*, particularly during the seventeenth century until the Tanzimat period, serves as a backdrop to the issuance of decrees establishing new *awqaf*. This trend, driven by influential individuals close to the Sultan, exploiting their positions, may explain the subsequent need for regulatory measures to scrutinize and rectify potentially illegitimate *awqaf*, contributing to a decline in the creation of new *waqf* entities.

METHODOLOGY

Embarking on the exploration of *awqaf*, Mehmet Fuad Köprülü pioneered the methodological approach within Turkish scholarship (Köprülü 1938: 12). Nevertheless, recent research suggests that the most noteworthy advancement in this realm emerges from

the contributions of Bahaeddin Yediyıldız. Yediyıldız not only identified but expounded upon three distinctive approaches:

Chronological and horizontal – according to which, a specific period of time had to be taken and divided into several sub-periods.

Geographical and vertical – according to which, a specific region had to be taken and studied for the *awqaf* established there.

Examination of Ottoman social complexes, known in Turkish as *külliye* (Yediyıldız 1985: 16-18).

Bahaeddin Yediyıldız gave the first example of the first approach with his work titled “*XVIII. Yüzyılda Türk Vakıf Müessesesi – Bir Sosyal Tarih İncelemesi*” (Yediyıldız 2003). Various studies have been conducted in the second approach, exemplified by Mustafa Alkan’s doctoral thesis titled “*Adana Vakıfları - İnsan, Vakıf ve Şehir*” (Alkan 2014). Moreover, the first example of the third approach, exploring Ottoman social complexes, was Fahri Unan’s comprehensive work titled “*Kuruluşundan Günümüze Fatih Külliyesi*” (Unan 2003).

As our article focuses on a specific region and a particular period, it adopts the *Geographic and Vertical Approach* as its methodology. This method allows for a nuanced examination of *awqaf* within the designated geographical context, capturing both the horizontal and vertical dimensions essential for a comprehensive understanding during the specified time frame.

A General Overview of *Awqaf* in Kosovo

The Ottoman Empire’s rule in the Balkans from the late fourteenth century until the early twentieth century saw the establishment of numerous *waqf* institutions, which played a vital role in shaping the region’s landscape. These institutions were created to serve various purposes, such as religious, educational, and charitable, and were supported by the endowment of property or money foundations, which was then administered by a trustee.

Throughout the Ottoman era, the Balkans, including Kosovo, witnessed a significant surge in building activity. This involved the construction of new structures within established towns, as well as the establishment of entirely new settlements and villages (Mufaku 2015: 261; Pinon 2008: 147). This significant building activity resulted in the creation of new towns and villages, as well as the construction of new buildings in existing towns. Large complexes known as *külliye*, which in general incorporated a mosque and other socio-economic institutions, were built in city centers, while smaller mosques were constructed in villages. In these instances, a local figure occupying a prominent administrative role within the Ottoman Empire, driven by a desire to contribute to his homeland, undertook the construction of significant structures for the community, such as mosques, schools, *hammams*, shops, and more. These establishments played a pivotal role in elevating a village to the status of a *kasaba* (town) and subsequently evolving into a full-fledged city (Mufaku 2015: 263-264). An illustrative example is the city of Kaçanik, established by Sinan Pasha, an Ottoman prime minister of Albanian origin. Sinan Pasha’s construction of a mosque, school, *imaret* (a facility offering free food), two inns, and a *hammam* served as the foundational elements upon which the city of Kaçanik was established (Kaleshi 2012: 334). The Ottoman style of urbanization exerted a dominant

influence in the region, evident in the construction of dervish lodges, schools, libraries, public baths, castles, and fountains across virtually all settlements in Kosovo. As a result, Kosovo stands as a country rich in Ottoman architectural heritage. The establishment of new *awqaf* was crucial in the development of many cities, especially Prizren and Pristina. Prizren, particularly noteworthy for its several significant *awqaf*, including elementary schools, a *hamam* (public bath) with separate sections for men and women, and a stone bridge (Malcolm 1998: 105). These buildings and structures had a significant impact on urbanization, economic development, and social life, serving as '*bridges between cities and regions*', as Bahaeddin Yediyıldız noted (Yediyıldız 2012 vol. 42: 483).

At the outset, the Ottomans dedicated their endeavors to the construction of religious edifices, particularly mosques and masjids. According to Ottoman tradition, masjids, unlike mosques where Friday prayers are conducted and equipped with a pulpit for the preacher, are smaller sanctuaries without a pulpit and where Friday prayers are not held (Önköl and Bozkurt 1993 vol. 7: 46). As a consequence of the establishment of *awqaf* in Kosovo, it can be argued that they played a crucial role in spreading Islamic culture and contributing to the Islamization of Albanians. The Bazaar Mosque, which was the first Ottoman mosque established in Kosovo, serves as a prime example. Its construction began under the reign of Sultan Bayezid I in 1389, continued during the reign of Sultan Murad II, and was finally completed during the reign of Sultan Mehmed Fatih. In 1902, the Bazaar Mosque underwent renovations under the patronage of Sultan Abdulhamid II, as indicated by an inscription above its entrance (Avdija 2021: 29). Despite the passage of centuries, the Bazaar Mosque still stands as a testament to the enduring impact of *awqaf* in the region, serving as a place of worship for the faithful and a symbol of the Ottoman legacy in Kosovo (BOA, BEO: no. 1179/88367/1; BOA, BEO: no. 1179/88367/2; BOA, BEO: no. 1179, 88367/; BOA, BEO: no. 1179/88367/5).

The Ottomans not only constructed new mosques in the territories they conquered, but they also had a practice of repurposing existing other religious structures for Islamic worship. This practice was especially common in the years immediately following a conquest as a means of asserting Ottoman dominance over the newly acquired territory. For example, after the capture of Prizren in 1451, Sultan Mehmed II ordered the conversion of the Church of Levisha into a mosque (Kaleshi 2012: 19). The building served as a place of worship for Muslims until the Ottomans withdrew from Kosovo in 1912, at which point it was restored to its original function as a church by the Serbian authorities. This practice of converting churches into mosques was not limited to Kosovo or the Balkans, as the Ottomans engaged in this practice in many of the territories they conquered throughout their empire.

Based on historical records, it appears that the establishment of large Ottoman complexes in the Balkans, including Kosovo, was a common practice during the first two centuries of Ottoman rule. These complexes, known as *küllîye*, were designed to meet the various needs of society and typically consisted of a mosque and other socio-economic institutions built around it. As the Ottoman Empire modernized and underwent significant reforms during the *Tanzimat* period, the trend shifted towards smaller *awqaf*. According to documents from the *Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivi* (General Directorate of Foundations Archives) in Ankara, small *awqaf* began to replace large ones during the nineteenth century, particularly during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II. These smaller institutions were established to cover expenses such as the maintenance of early *awqaf* and the payment

of imams and employees from various sectors.

By examining the reasons behind the decline in the number of newly established large *waqf* institutions, we can deduce the following factors:

1. During the initial Ottoman period in the Balkans, many foundations were established in accordance with the state's conquest policies and possibilities. This was a time of expansion and consolidation, with the Ottomans seeking to establish their presence in the region and secure their newly acquired territories. As such, the establishment of large *waqf* institutions was a priority, both as a means of demonstrating Ottoman power and as a way of providing for the religious and social needs of the population.
2. With the completion of the state's construction activities to a large extent, new foundations were only established in cases of need and in line with the economic situation of the state.
3. The evolution of the Ottoman Empire witnessed a transition from a state primarily focused on tax collection for military expenses and administration—resulting in the necessity of endowments to deliver essential services such as education and health—to a restructured state model. This transformation was marked by the establishment of specialized government ministries dedicated to key sectors like education, construction, health, and more, essentially absorbing the responsibilities previously undertaken by *awqaf*.
4. The abolition of “*müsadere*” – a practice in the Ottoman Empire involving the confiscation of properties belonging to government officials or soldiers who died or were discharged from service (Tomar 2006 vol. 32: 65-67) – could have potentially hindered the creation of new foundations.

In this way, the Ottomans shifted their focus from constructing new institutions to maintaining and improving existing ones. This is reflected in the many examples of *waqf* institutions that were renovated, expanded or repurposed during this period, including mosques, schools, hospitals, and other public buildings that had been established in previous periods. By repurposing existing buildings, the Ottomans were able to make more efficient use of their resources and avoid unnecessary construction costs.

Despite fluctuations in the establishment of new *awqaf* over the centuries of Ottoman rule, the trend persisted until the empire's end. The Ottoman Empire, with its emphasis on philanthropy and social welfare, continued to inspire the creation of charitable endowments by individuals until the last days of the empire. In fact, the establishment of the last Ottoman *waqf* in Kosovo in 1911, by *Eyyub bin Yasar ibn Shaikh Adem*, demonstrates the persistence of the *waqf* tradition until the end of the empire. This particular *waqf* was created to generate revenue for a newly constructed mosque in the village of Bullugrace near Kaçanik city, highlighting the enduring legacy of Ottoman philanthropy and charitable giving (VGMA: 604/188/267).

Today, the deteriorated state of numerous Ottoman architectural structures in Kosovo, resulting from damage or destruction over time, highlights the pressing challenges they encounter in the present day. Unfortunately, despite this lamentable reality, a comprehensive study encompassing all of these structures in Kosovo has not yet been undertaken. This lack of investigation poses difficulties in accurately gauging the extent of preservation requirements and formulating effective strategies for their restoration and safeguarding. Despite this, the Institute of Turkish History has made commendable efforts to document and provide information on endowments that have survived to this day. According to them, there are currently 224 Ottoman architectural buildings in Kosovo,

many of which continue to serve their original function today (İbrahimgil and Konuk 2006: xxv). These structures are important not only from a historical and cultural perspective but also as a testament to the Ottoman period's architectural and engineering achievements.

Awqaf Established During the Rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II

Throughout history, people have established *waqf* institutions for various reasons, such as to demonstrate religious devotion or to create social equality and balance. Consequently, a wide range of *awqaf* have been created, including those that support religious services, schools, and income-generating foundations such as shops and monetary foundations. Regardless of their purpose, these institutions have played an essential role in providing a wide range of social services to the community, including education, healthcare, and support for the poor and needy. They have also contributed to the preservation of cultural and architectural heritage, as many *waqf* buildings are among the oldest and most beautiful structures in the country today.

Throughout the history of Kosovo, the establishment of new endowments has experienced fluctuations. The number of new endowments noticeably declined from the early 19th century, and this trend persisted until the *Tanzimat* era. During the *Tanzimat* era, the establishment of new endowments virtually came to a halt. There could be multiple factors that contributed to this decline, including the reasons mentioned earlier, such as socio-economic changes and the abolition of *müsadere*, as well as the fact that the Ottoman Empire was undergoing a period of reform and modernization during this time. It is possible that these reforms shifted the priorities and focus of the state and society, resulting in fewer resources being allocated towards the establishment of new endowments. Despite the general trend of declining numbers of new *awqaf* established during the *Tanzimat* period, the late nineteenth century witnessed a significant surge in the establishment of new *awqaf* in Kosovo. Between 1877 and 1909, the total number of newly founded *awqaf* in Kosovo reached 51, marking a remarkable increase. However, the nature of these *awqaf* differed from those established in earlier periods. Instead of large and comprehensive complexes, small-scale *awqaf* began to emerge. Based on our research, monetary foundations, shops, and mosques built in villages were among the most frequently established *awqaf* during this time period (Avdiija 2021: 33-34). The newly established *awqaf* comprised 20 monetary foundations, 12 mosques, 7 shops, 5 *maktabs* (primary schools) and 3 fountains. The rest were diverse *awqaf* such as a plot of land, a house, a kitchen, and a mill. This indicates that the trend towards establishing smaller, more diverse *awqaf* continued during this period (Avdiija 2021: 32-36). While new mosques constructed in villages were most prevalent during this period, various structures were also built in urban areas. Such wonderful examples are also the *Hamidiye* Mosque and *Hamidiye Maktab*, constructed in Mitrovica's *Hamidiye* neighborhood in 1894 (BOA, BEO: no. 527/39514/1).

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricate functioning of these *awqaf*, a meticulous examination of *vakfiye* documents is indispensable. *Vakfiye* documents play a crucial role by delineating the intended charitable purposes for donated properties, providing insights into their management, and offering a wealth of information on the subject (Özgüdenli 2012 vol. 42: 465). Within this context, Ottoman cash *awqaf* emerge as a fascinating aspect of the philanthropic landscape. While adhering to Islamic finance principles that discourage the explicit charging of interest, historical documents indicate

specific rates of return associated with these cash *awqaf*, often falling within the range of 10% to 15%. The funds from these cash *awqaf* were strategically invested in Sharia-compliant ways, such as trade or other permissible economic activities. Furthermore, the operational mechanism of these cash *awqaf* involved a distinctive approach to funds that were intended to be returned. This process was facilitated through either *rehin* or *kafil* (pledge or surety). This method introduced an additional layer of security and accountability, aligning with the ethical and responsible financial practices inherent in the Ottoman monetary *waqf* system. A concrete illustration of the functioning of a *waqf* can be found in the establishment of a monetary foundation by Mehmet Kamil Efendi ibn Hafz Ali Efendi in 1884. This *waqf* was created with an amount of 1000 *kuruş* (Ottoman currency) to support the Pirana village mosque. As stated in the *vakfiye*, the money was to be spent as follows over the course of a year: 100 *kuruş* for the *imam* of the mosque, 40 *kuruş* for the *hatib* (lecturer) who delivers the Friday sermon (Kaya 1998 vol. 18: 156), and 10 *kuruş* for the *waqf* supervisor (VGMA: no. 989/33/28). The profits of another monetary foundation established in 1890 were entirely allocated to the *imam*. Based on the *waqf* document dated 1307 A.H./ 1890 A.D., a man named Ömer Bin Zennun from the village of Leskovec, which was under the jurisdiction of Prizren, donated 500 *kuruş* from his own property to the newly built mosque in the village. He appointed Hayreddin bin Halil, one of the village residents, as the trustee to oversee the collection of this amount in a permissible manner, either through *rehin veya kafil* (pledge or surety), and to repay it annually with an interest rate of eleven and a half *kuruş*. The revenue generated will be given as the salary for the *imams* of the village. The endower will manage the *waqf* during his lifetime, and after his death, it will be entrusted to a trustworthy and upright person from among the village residents, as per his wishes (VGMA: no. 989/29/25). In 1891, a similar *waqf* was established in Prizren by a group of people with the same interests and goals, namely Selim Aga, Hasan Aga, Usta Bayram, and Cafer Aga. This *waqf* functioned in a similar manner to the one previously mentioned, with all income to be given to the *imam* in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the *vakfiye* (VGMA: no. 989/37/31). Others have taken it upon themselves to construct mosques in their communities. However, erecting and maintaining a mosque can be quite a financial burden. This is why some have opted to establish income-generating endowments as a means of covering these expenses, in addition to the mosque itself. One such example can be found in the endowment of Hayrullah Aga ibn Bahtiyar in 1897. After building a mosque in his hometown of Belobrat, he established a monetary foundation worth of 1500 *kuruş* to ensure that the mosque workers would be paid. As outlined in his *vakfiye*, the *imam* was to receive an annual salary of 100 *kuruş*, the *hatib* 75 *kuruş*, and the *muezzin*, responsible for issuing the call to prayer (Küçükbaşcı 2020 vol. 31: 489) will receive 25 *kuruş*. Additionally, 25 *kuruş* was to be set aside for any necessary mosque restorations (VGMA: no. 990/25/21).

The establishment of endowments like this one not only ensures the financial sustainability of mosques but also reflects the importance of these religious institutions in the community. It shows the dedication and generosity of individuals who are committed to maintaining these sacred spaces for future generations to come. By providing financial support, these endowments help to maintain the daily operations of the mosque and ensure that it remains an integral part of the community for years to come.

During this period, many individuals also opened stores to support the upkeep of mosques. One notable example is Abide Hanım, the daughter of al-Haj Bekir Aga from the city of Vushtrri (known as Vılçitırn in Turkish and historically referred to as Vuçitërn),

who established a store as a *waqf*. The revenue generated from this business was designated to fund the Karamanli Mosque in Vushtrri, with 150 *kuruş* allotted for the salary of the mosque's lecturer each year, 10 *kuruş* for the *waqf* supervisor, and the remaining funds earmarked for the maintenance of the mosque according to pre-established guidelines (VGMA: no. 991/21/23).

Ayet bin Maksut, another resident of Vushtrri, was also among those who dedicated their resources to support their local mosque. He established an *imaret*, which is a charitable institution that provides free food to the poor (Ertuğ 2000 vol. 22: 219), as well as a mansion from his estate to assist in covering the expenses of the mosque in Lupçe-i Zir village. The distribution of income generated from Ayet bin Maksut's mansion has been pre-determined and will be divided according to specific guidelines. The imam will receive 250 *kuruş* while the *hatib* will receive 100 *kuruş* (VGMA: no. 990/51/43).

Traditionally, foundations were established with the noble intention of bringing people closer to God, and the profits generated by the *waqf* typically supported various public institutions such as schools, mosques, and other essential services. As elucidated earlier, the name of the *waqf* property often remained in the donor's name. However, it is noteworthy that not all foundations adhered to this conventional model. Some, such as family *awqaf*, directed their profits exclusively to the donor's family. An illustrative example of this familial endowment is the *waqf* established by Hasan Efendi bin Ali bin Salih in 1890. Hasan Efendi, a member of a family dedicated to serving as tomb guardians in the Tomb of Sultan Murad I located in Pristina, explicitly stipulated in the foundation document that "...all of the profits generated by the *waqf* should go exclusively to his family..." (VGMA: no. 989/94/70). While the establishment of a *waqf* with the intention of solely benefiting one's family may seem unusual, it was not unheard of during that time period. Many *awqaf* were established to benefit specific groups or individuals, and as such, the profits generated were often allocated accordingly.

Although scarce, mills also served as a source of income generating *waqf* during the Ottoman period in Kosovo. One of the individuals who contributed to the establishment of such *awqaf* in Yezerce village, near Pristina, was Mehmed bin Halil. The donated mill would be rented out, and half of the generated profits would be allocated to the imams and preachers of the local mosque. However, it remains unknown who would benefit from the other half of the revenue (VGMA: no. 991/50/65).

There is another practice of establishing *awqaf* in the Islamic world known as *vasiyet awqaf*, which involves a person leaving a portion of their property or money for charitable purposes in their will. This type of *waqf* is established after the death of the donor and is governed by the same principles as regular *awqaf*, with the only difference being that the donor's property is not transferred to the *waqf* during their lifetime. Instead, the beneficiaries receive their share after the donor's death according to the conditions outlined in their will (Ari 2012 vol. 42: 552-555). This *waqf* allows individuals to donate a portion of their assets to charitable causes, even if they were unable to do so during their lifetime. It also provides a means of supporting beneficiaries beyond the donor's death, ensuring a continuous source of funding for the chosen cause. In many cases, *vasiyet awqaf* are established to benefit the poor, fund education, or support religious institutions. The beneficiaries can be chosen by the donor themselves or designated by the court in accordance with the donor's wishes. Overall, *vasiyet awqaf* are an important means of supporting charitable causes in the Islamic world, and they have a long history of providing

crucial funding for various social and religious initiatives. According to the principles of Ottoman Islamic law, it was possible for an individual to leave a bequest of *sülüs* (one-third) of their wealth to establish a *waqf* after their death. The remaining assets could only be donated if the heirs of the deceased accepted this disposition. This was intended to ensure that the rights of the heirs were not violated, and that the bequest did not undermine the inheritance of the next of kin (Akgündüz 2013: 164). During the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, there was only one *waqf* established in Kosovo using the *vasiyet* method. The bequest was made by Penbe Hanım, the daughter of Receb Aga from Prizren. She bequeathed her mansion, which was worth fifty thousand *kuruş*. According to the information in the testament, the donor had the right to live in the mansion for the rest of her life. Upon her demise, the right to reside in the mansion would pass on to her brother, Said Aga. However, if he declined the opportunity, the mansion would be sold, and the proceeds would be utilized to acquire a shop. The shop would then be converted into an income-generating *waqf* (VGMA: no. 991/54/71).

This type of bequest was not very common, as many people preferred to establish *awqaf* during their lifetimes rather than after their deaths. However, it was still a valid method of establishing *awqaf*, and Penbe Hanım's bequest serves as an example of how individuals could contribute to the development of their communities through this practice. The fact that Penbe Hanım's bequest was directed towards the creation of an income-generating *waqf* shows that she was not only concerned with providing for her family members but also with leaving a lasting legacy that would benefit the community.

The Enduring Impact of Sultan Abdülhamid II: A Look at the *Awqaf* Established in His Name

While the number of foundations established by the sultans during the last Ottoman period in Kosovo was limited, their significance was substantial. Throughout our research, we discovered several institutions in the Kosovo region linked to Sultan Abdulhamid II. There are many institutions named after him, even though he only founded one of them. These institutions consist of many mosques and schools. Furthermore, there was a neighborhood in Mitrovica city named *Hamidiye Mahalle* (known as Bajr today) and a village known as *Hamidiye* (BOA, DH.MKT: no. 2108/9; BOA, ŞD: no. 1982/37/3; BOA, ŞD: no. 1982/37/4) that was closely related to his name. Though the exact location of the village is now unknown, however, it is known that the village was connected to the city of Prizren (BOA, İ.DH: no. 1359/24/1).

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue raised above, it is necessary to divide these *awqaf* into two distinct categories: those that were established by Sultan Abdulhamid II himself and those that were established by individuals.

***Awqaf* Established by Sultan Abdulhamid II**

During his reign, Sultan Abdulhamid II established a singular *waqf* in Kosovo—a mosque. Although there is limited information available about it, a single document preserved in the Ottoman Archive indicates that this mosque was constructed in the village of Perepalas near Prishtina and was inaugurated on October 5, 1893 (BOA, DH.MKT: no. 152/44/1).

***Awqaf* Established by the People**

The admiration of Sultan Abdulhamid II by the Kosovo Albanians resulted in the

naming of various institutions after him, including mosques, schools, neighborhoods, and even villages. A document serves as a remarkable example of this trend, in which the residents of the village of Isveti Petre near Prizren urge for a name change of their village to *Hamidiye*. In the document, they explain that since there are no Christians in their village and all of the residents are Muslims, the village name, together with the newly built mosque name, and school name should reflect their Islamic identity. The village's current name, Isveti Petre, was given before the Ottoman government arrived, and when the residents were non-Muslims. Thus, they find it inappropriate for their Islamic village to bear a name with a non-Muslim origin. They, therefore, request a change of the name of their village, mosque and school to *Hamidiye*, in honor of Sultan Abdulhamid II (BOA, DH.MKT: no. 2108/9; BOA, İ.DH: no. 1359/24/1; BOA, ŞD: no. 1982/37/3; BOA, ŞD: no. 1982/37/4).

There are several other *awqaf* named after Sultan Abdulhamid that can be found throughout Kosovo, including a mosque built in Firzovik (today known as Ferizaj) in 1884 (BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK: no. 8/68/1), the aforementioned mosque and a school in Mitrovica (BOA, BEO: no. 527/39514/1), a mosque and a school built in 1900 in Peja's *Ohçe* village (BOA, İ.HUS: no. 84/75/1), a mosque and a school in the Yanoşefçe village of Malsiya Strait in Yakova (Gjakova) (BOA, TFR.I.KV: no. 116/11538/1; BOA, TFR.I.KV: no. 117/11700/2; BOA, BEO: no. 2441/183063; BOA, DH.MKT: no. 906/85/1; BOA, DH.MKT: no. 906/85/2; BOA, TFR.I.A: no. 35/3466/2), a mosque built in 1906 in Tertofça village of Pristina (BOA, BEO: no. 2867/214975/1) and a mosque built in 1911 in Gilan, which on that time was under Pristina (BOA, BEO: no. 3893/291965/1).

CONCLUSION

Even though the newly established *awqaf* during the late Ottoman period in Kosovo were relatively small in comparison to those established earlier, their impact on the religious, economic and social context of the region was significant. One of their primary functions was to ensure the proper operation of various mosques by paying imams, lecturers and *waqf* supervisors. Moreover, the income generated by monetary foundations and shops allowed these institutions to remain operational, providing essential religious and social services to the community. Another significant aspect of this time period was the way endowments were established, starting with those left as a testament and continuing with others, the profits of which went entirely to the founder's family.

Taking into account the important religious, economic, and social impact of *awqaf* during the late Ottoman period in Kosovo, it can be inferred that they served a broader purpose beyond simply providing financial support to institutions. The benefits of these endowments extended to the community at large, as they provided opportunities for individuals to work in various professions and contribute to the betterment of society. This was especially significant given that the establishment of late Ottoman *awqaf* was not limited to the wealthy and elite members of society, but was also undertaken by ordinary people who were able to make meaningful contributions to their community.

إرث مؤسسة الوقف خلال عهد السلطان عبد الحميد الثاني في كوسوفو

فخرى عوديا¹

ملخص

تبحث هذه الورقة في التأسيس التاريخي لمؤسسات الوقف في كوسوفو، مع التركيز على الفترة العثمانية خلال عهد السلطان عبد الحميد الثاني. من خلال تحليل المصادر الأولية من الأرشيف العثماني في إسطنبول والمديرية العامة لأرشيف المؤسسات في أنقرة، وتهدف إلى تقديم نظرة عامة شاملة عن الأوقاف التي أنشأها السلطان عبد الحميد الثاني بنفسه، ورجال الدولة، والناس العاديون المعروفون باسم الرعية. وقد توصل البحث إلى نتيجة أنه في حين أن مؤسسات الوقف الأولى أنشأها السلاطين وكانت مجمعات كبيرة تُعرف باسم الكليّة، فقد أسسها في وقت لاحق، وتحديداً في أواخر القرن التاسع عشر وأوائل القرن العشرين، سكان المنطقة، وكانت عادةً أماكن عبادة صغيرة، إضافة إلى المؤسسات الوقفية الأخرى التي كانت توفر دخلاً مادياً، مثل المحلات والمؤسسات النقدية. وتسلط الأثار المترتبة على هذه النتائج الضوء على دور الوقف في تطوير الهياكل الاجتماعية والاقتصادية لكوسوفو خلال الفترة العثمانية.

الكلمات الدالة: الأوقاف، كوسوفو، السلطان عبد الحميد الثاني، الألبان.

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Figure 1. The Vakfiye of Mehmet Kamil Efendi ibn Hafz Ali Efendi
VGMA: no. 989/33/28

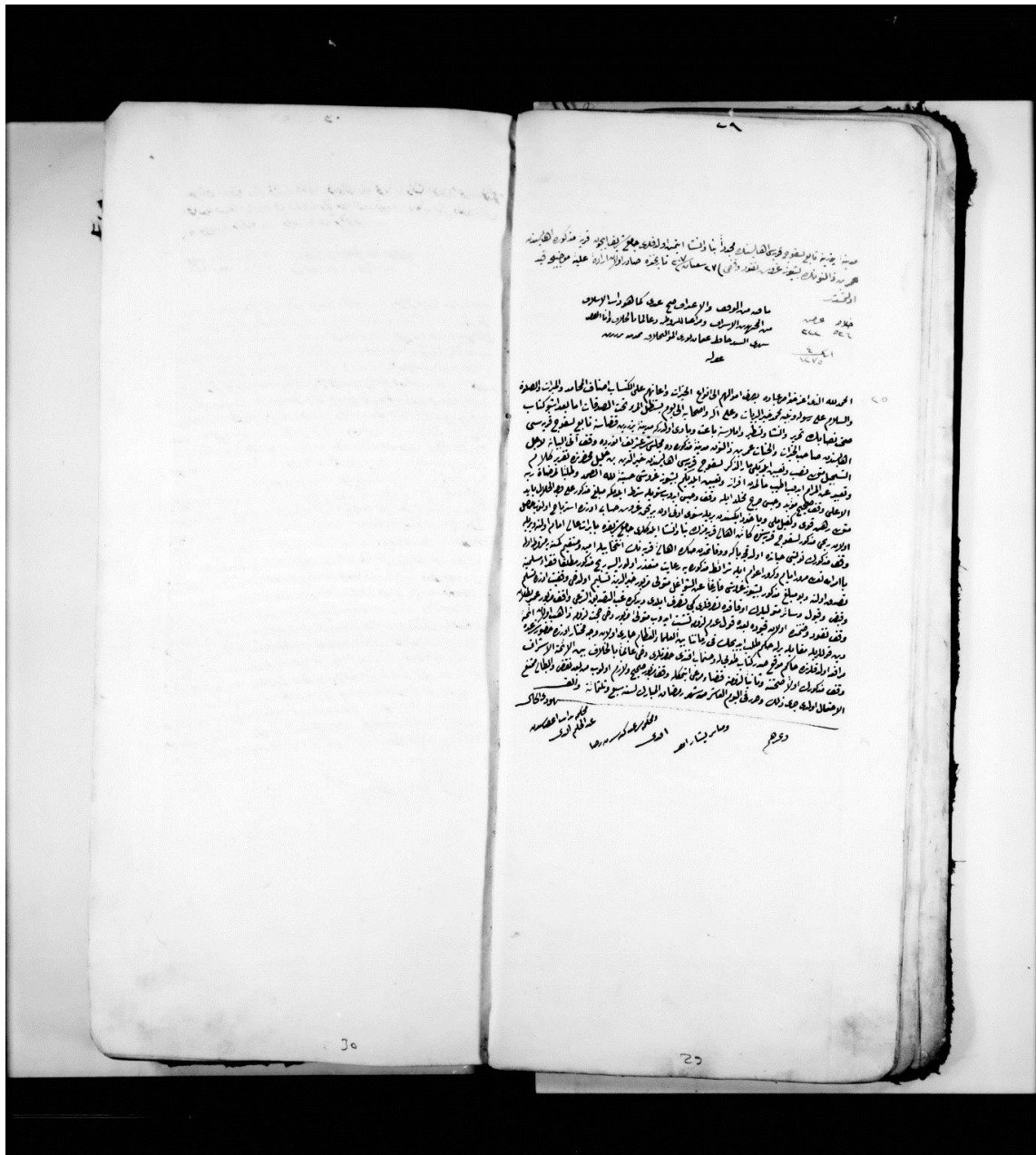


Figure 2. The Vakfiye of Ömer bin Zennun
VGMA: no. 989/29/25

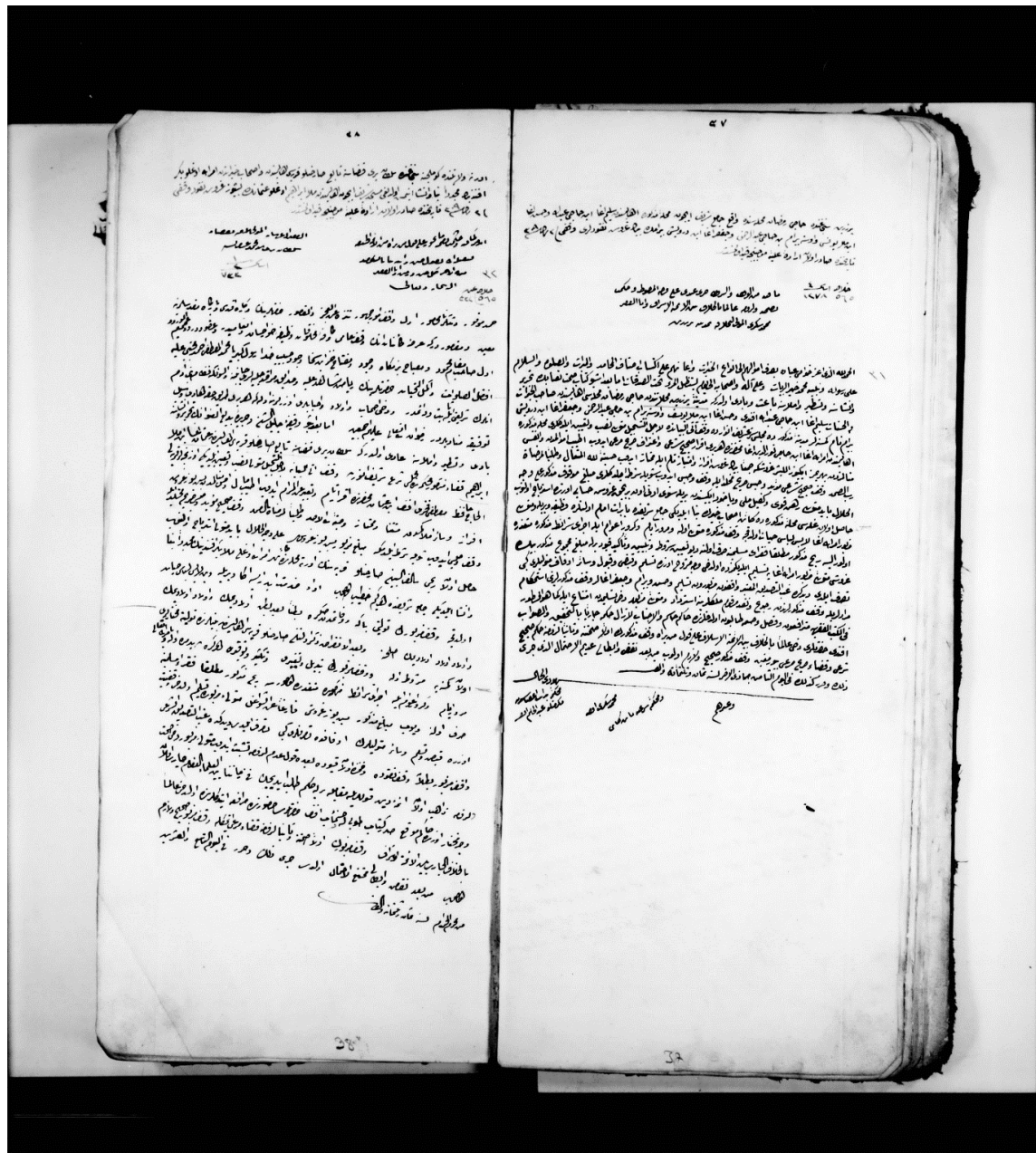


Figure 3. The Vakfiye of Selim Aga, Hasan Aga, Usta Bayram, and Cafer Aga
VGMA: no. 989/37/31

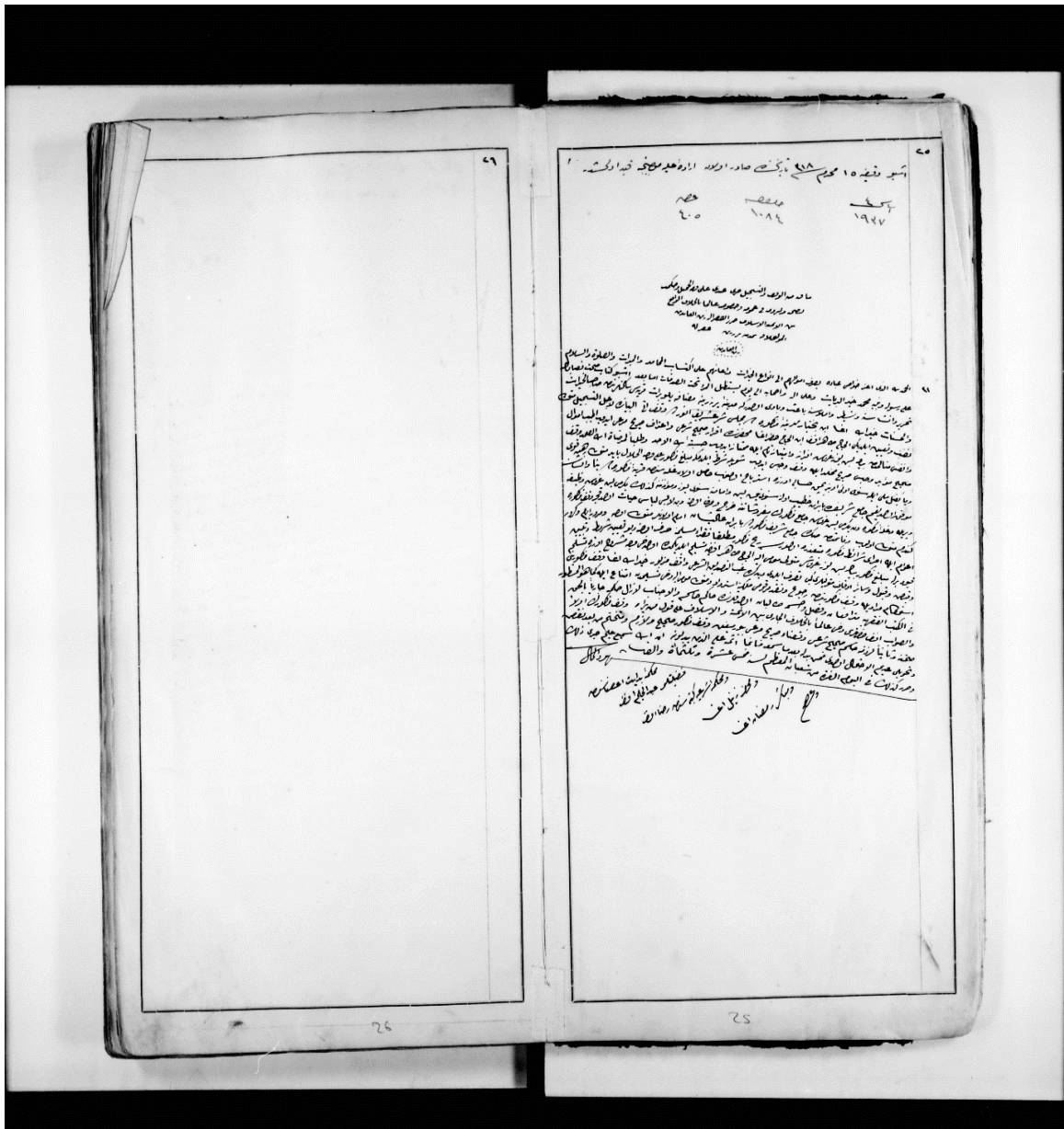


Figure 4. The Vakfiye of Hayrullah Aga ibn Bahtiyar
VGMA: no. 990/25/21

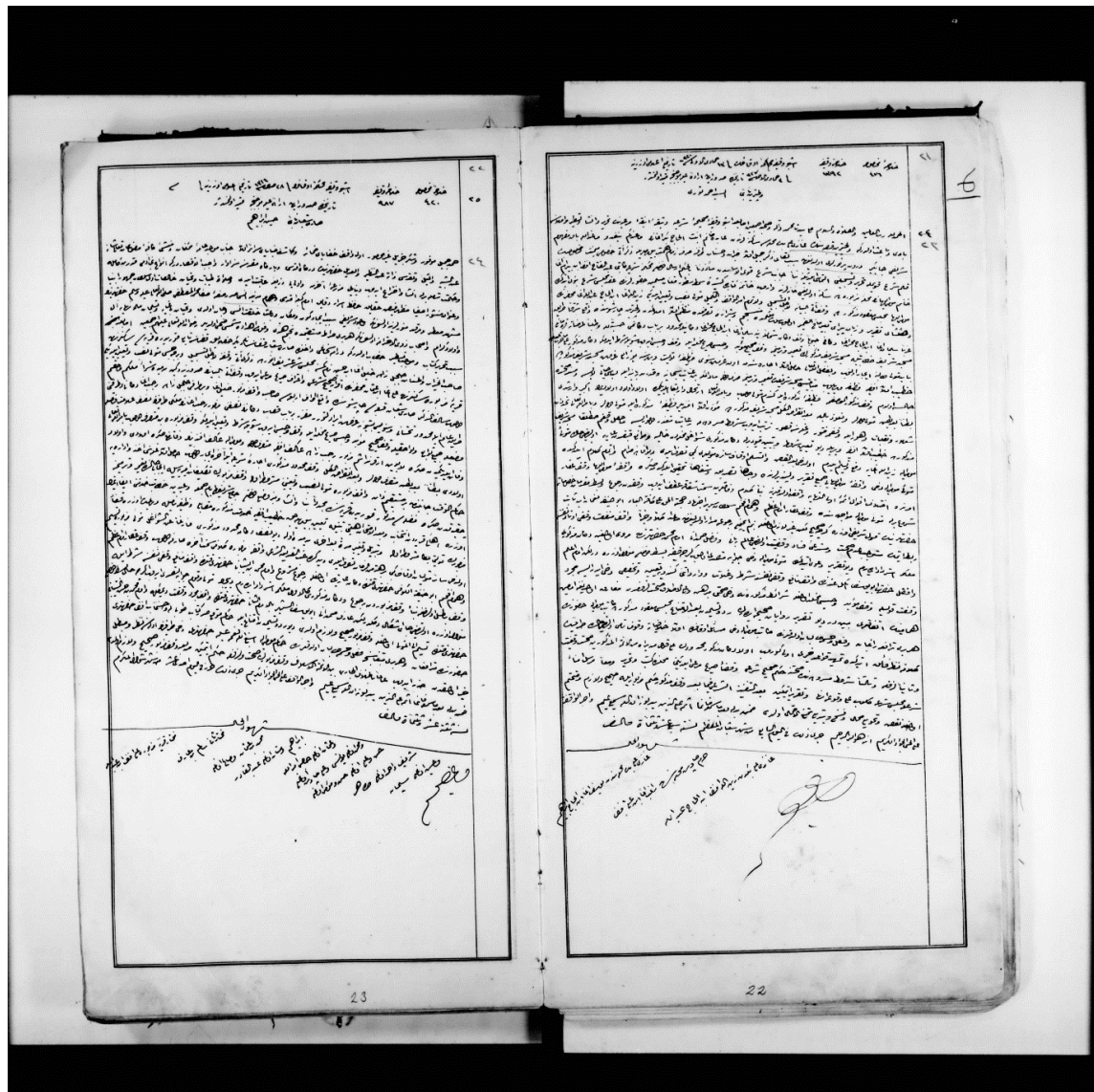


Figure 5. The Vakfiye of Abide Hanım
VGMA: no. 991/21/23

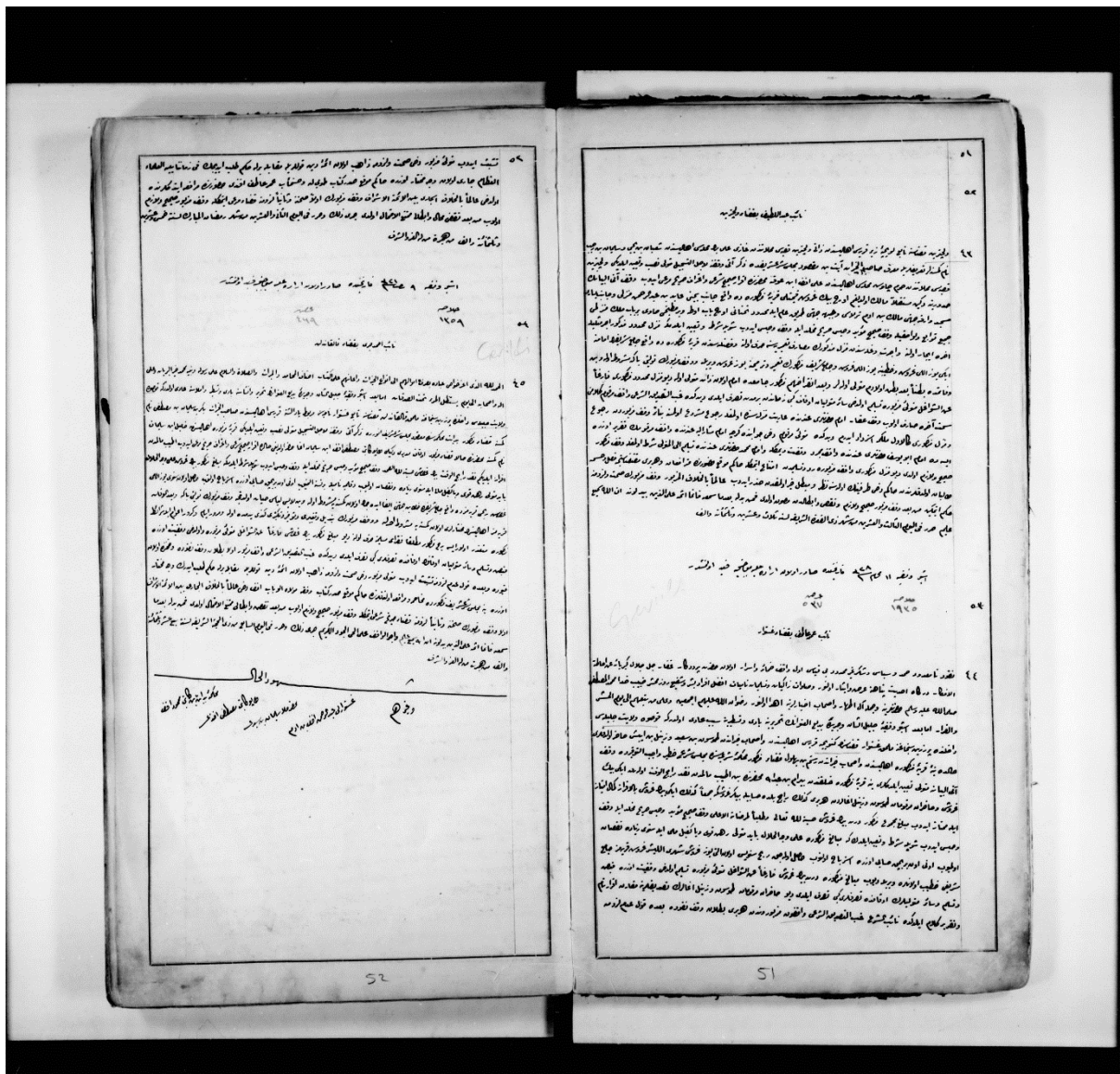


Figure 6. The Vakfiye of Ayet bin Maksut

VGMA: no. 990/51/43

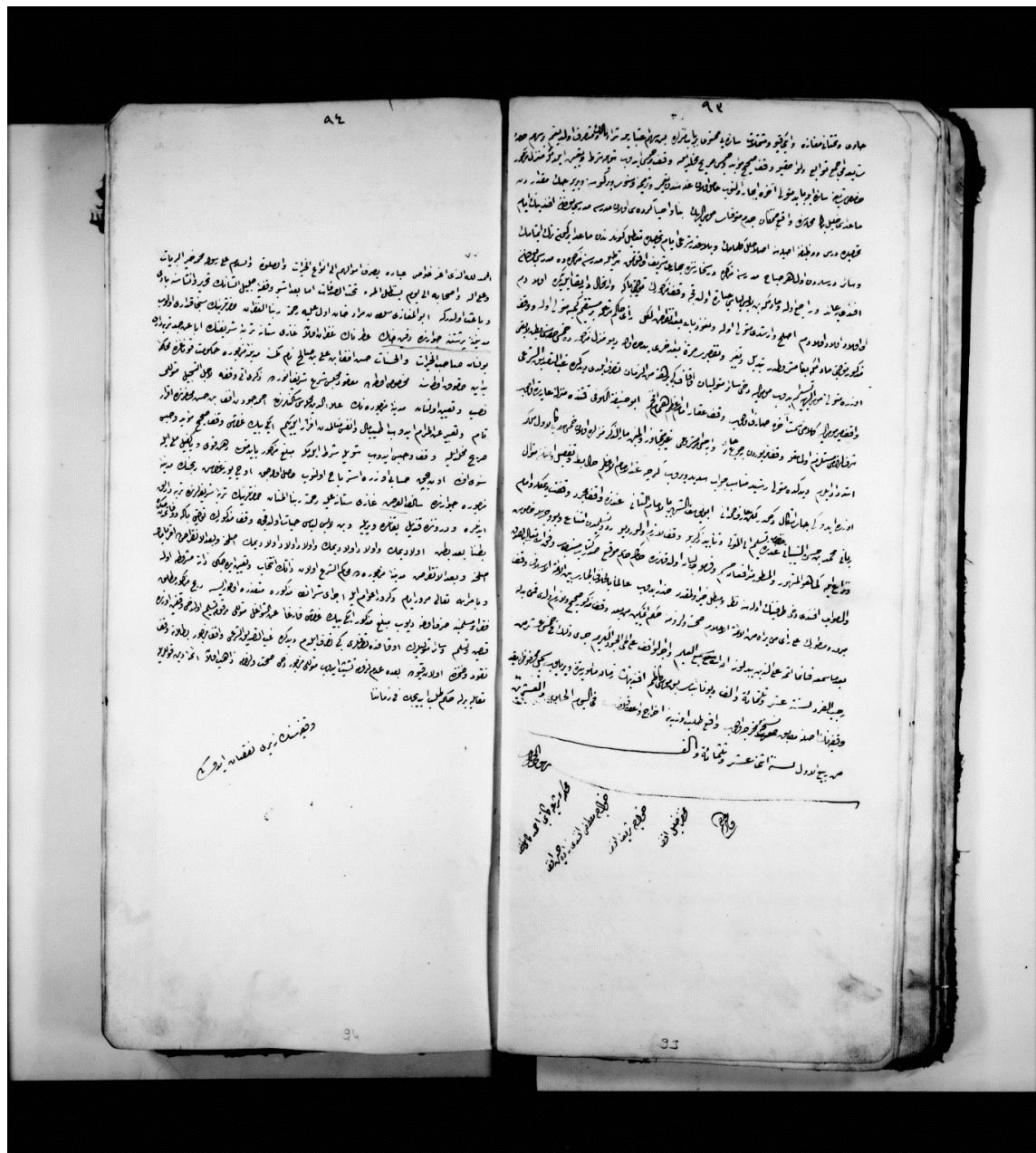


Figure 7. The Vakfiye of Hasan Efendi ibn Ali bin Salih
VGMA: no. 989/94/70

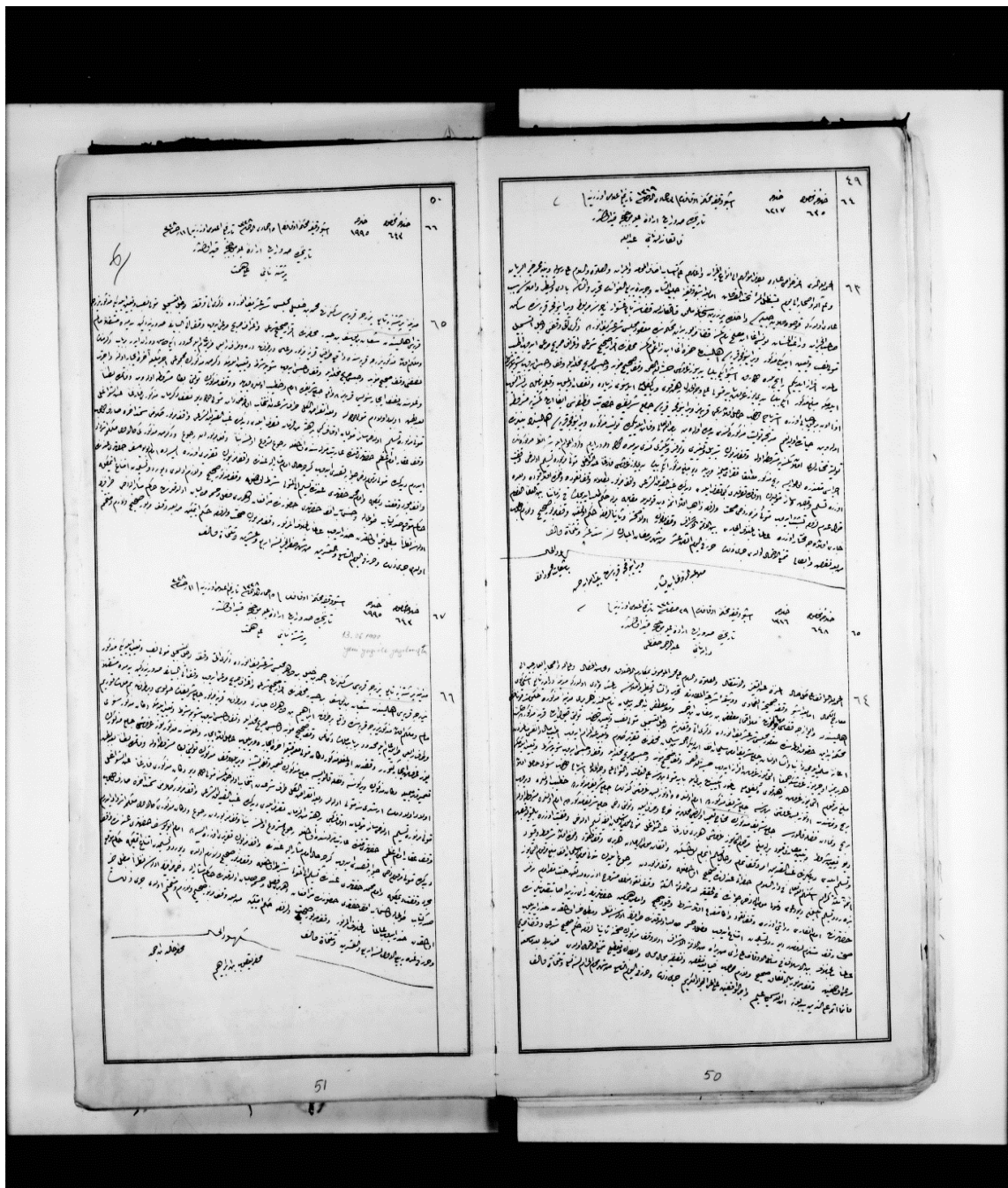


Figure 8. The Vakfiye of Mehmed bin Halil

VGMA: no. 991/50/65

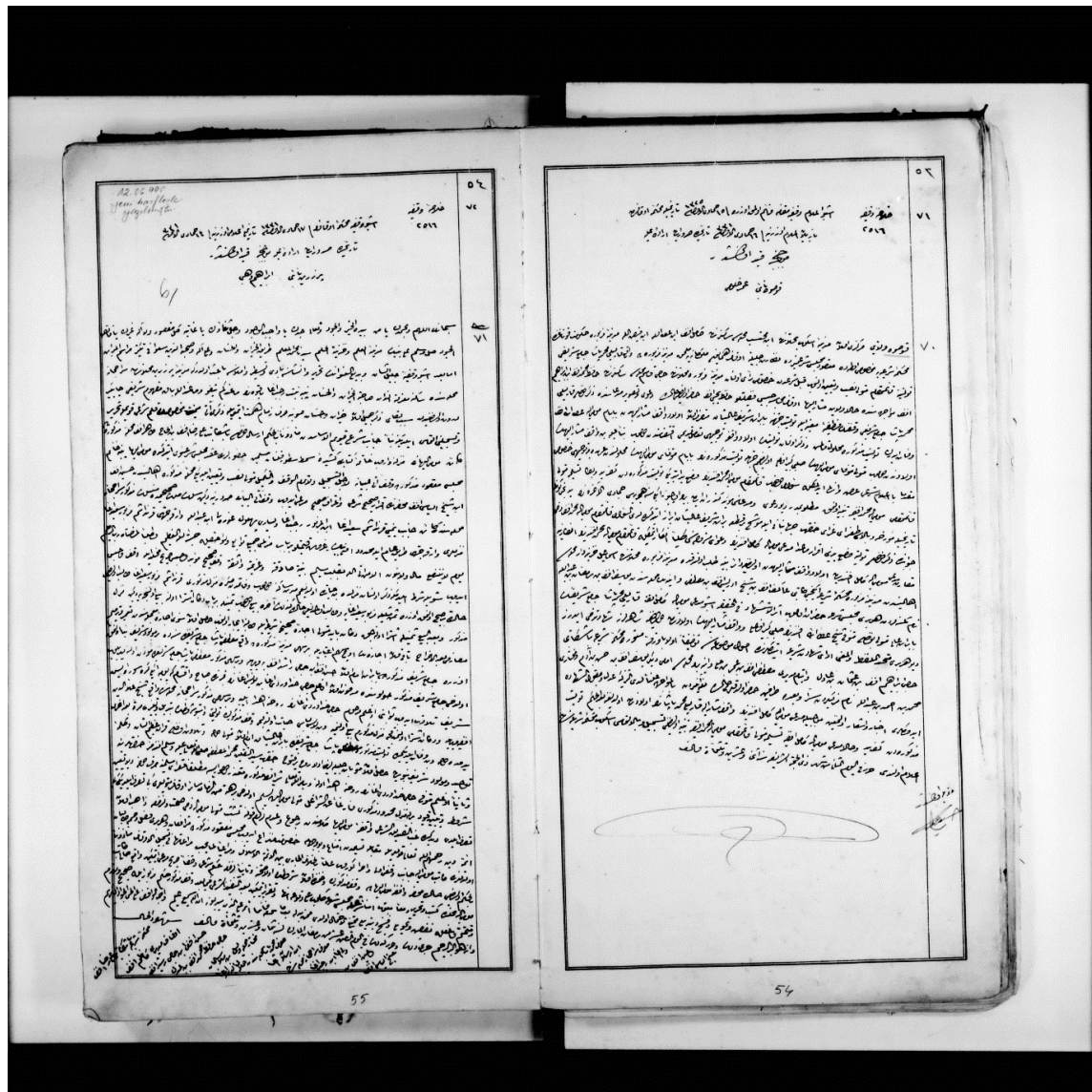


Figure 9. The Vakfiye of Penbe Hanım
VGMA: no. 991/54/71

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