

UDC 930.85(4-12)

ISSN 0350-7653

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

BALCANICA

XL (2009)

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

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BELGRADE
2010



Women *Vaqfs* in the Sixteenth-century Sanjak of Kruševac (Alaca Hisâr)

Abstract: The role of the *vaqf* in the Ottoman Empire, as in the whole Islamic world, was quite significant, especially in a period marked by the founding of new oriental settlements. The first endowers in the newly-conquered lands were sultans, begs and prominent government officials. Affluent citizens also took part in endowing their cities, and women are known to have been among them. The aim of the paper, based on Ottoman sources, is to shed light on the participation of Muslim women in this kind of humanitarian and lucrative activity using the example of the Sanjak of Kruševac (Alaca Hisâr) in the sixteenth century.

Keywords: *vaqf*, women *vaqfs*, Sanjak of Kruševac (Alaca Hisâr), Ottoman Empire, sixteenth century

The *vaqf*, a pious and charitable institution, has played a very important role in the Islamic world, thus in the Ottoman Empire and there especially in the process of establishing oriental Islamic settlements.¹ The simplest definition is that it was an institution whose main purpose was to alleviate poverty and to bolster social development. Rich Ottomans founded endowments mainly from religious motives,² hopeful to abide in their lives by the *hâdis* of the prophet Muhammad (a.s.) *sevab ba'del mevt*.³ However,

¹ See "Wakf", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* XI (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 59–99; Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600*, after the Serbian edition *Osmansko carstvo: klasično doba 1300–1600* (Belgrade 2003), 220–224.

² Many ayat in the Qur'an speak about the need of doing charity. Al-Baqara is a sura particularly rich in ayat urging people to give to charity and help the poor (e.g. ayat 261, 262, 264–267, 270–274 etc).

³ Mehmed Begović, *Vakufi u Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1963), 11–19. There are other works on *vaqfs*, such as Richard van Leeuwen, *Waqf and Urban Structures: The Case of Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Maya Shatzmiller, "Islamic Institutions and Property Rights: The Case of the 'Public Good' Waqf", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (JESHO) 44, 1 (2001), 44–74, which examines the institutional economic performance of the *public good waqf*; Svetlana Ivanova, "Muslim Charity Foundations (Vakf) and the Models of Religious Behavior of Ottoman Social Estates in Rumeli (late 15th to 19th Centuries)", *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit* 5/2 (2005), 44–69; Ronald C. Jennings, "Pious Foundations in the Society and Economy of Ottoman Trabzon, 1565–1640", *JESHO*

many founded *vaqfs* merely for social prestige and in order to gain tangible benefits.⁴

The first endowers in the newly-conquered areas were sultans, begs, prominent government officials, and rich citizens among whom there were women too. The purpose of *vaqfs* was to meet the religious and educational needs of the growing Muslim population. The *vaqf* system ensured the development and growth of new Muslim towns, and helped Islam to spread, at first in Anatolia and then further west, towards the Balkans. *Vaqfs* were most of all intended for building religious establishments such as mosques, *mescids*, *mektebs*, *medreses* or *zâviyes*, but in many cases the endowers funded the building of public facilities, such as *hâns*, *kervân-serâys*, bridges, drinking fountains, *hammâms*, *imârets*, which were intended for use by all citizens regardless of their religious and ethnic affiliation.⁵

Gifts for pious purposes (*sadaka*) were not confined to construction, but also involved the maintenance of the facilities and establishments thus built. *Vaqfs* increasingly often lent money at a rate of interest (*ribh*) (the return was usually 11.5 or even 12 *akçes* for 10 *akçes* borrowed, which made about 15–20 percent on the annual level). In this way, the cash holdings of many *vaqfs* became substantial. Besides the interest charged, some of their revenue came from renting *vaqf* property (for example, *hammâms* or *hâns*), from the endowed land, mills, shops etc. The revenue was used for the maintenance of the *vaqf*, employees' salaries, humanitarian activity such as public kitchens and hospitals.⁶

33/3 (1990), 271–336, where the institution of *vaqf* is studied using the example of a town, etc.

⁴ Gabriel Baer, "The Waqf as Prop for the Social System (Sixteenth–Twentieth Centuries)", *Islamic Law and Society* 4/3 (1997), 273–274.

⁵ Dragana Amedoski, "Alaca Hisar Sancağına Ait 1536 Tarihli Bir Vakıf Defteri", *Belleten* (Ankara), forthcoming.

⁶ In the historical work done so far in the Balkans the above-cited study of Mehmed Begović, although published quite a while ago, remains the most serious attempt at taking a general look at the issue of *vaqfs*. To be mentioned as well are Adem Handžić, "O formiranju nekih gradskih naselja u Bosni u XVI stoljeću (uloga države i vakufa)", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* (POF) XXV (Sarajevo 1975), 133–169; Behija Zlatar, "Popis vakufa u Bosni iz prve polovice XVI stoljeća", *POF* XX–XXI (1970–71); Olga Zirojević, "Vakuf – ugaoni kamen gradova", *Novopazarski zbornik* 17 (1993), 67–71; Aleksandar Fotić, "Uloga vakufa u razvoju orijentalnog grada: beogradski vakuf Mehmed-paše Jahjapašića", in *Socijalna struktura srpskih gradskih naselja (XII–XVIII vek)* (Smederevo–Belgrade 1992), 149–159; Vera Mutafchieva, "Za rolyata na vakyfa v gradskata ikonomika na Balkanite pod turska vlast (XV–XVII v.)", *Izvestiya na Instituta za istoriya* X (1962), 121–145, etc. The journal *Glasnik islamske vjerske zajednice* printed in Sarajevo has brought out many papers that look at the institution of *vaqf*, but only from

There is a quite ample bibliography on the *vaqfs* in the Ottoman Balkans. The work done so far has looked at the *vaqf* exclusively from the perspective of Shariyat⁷ and has for the most part been devoted to Bosnia and Herzegovina. As for the *vaqfs* established in the territory of present-day Serbia, work has been confined to the study and publication of *vaqf-nâmes*, and mostly for Kosovo and Metohija.⁸ Besides, the monographs on larger urban centres, such as Belgrade or Niš, have paid attention to the *vaqfs* founded there in Ottoman times, and some *vaqfs* have been discussed in separate papers.⁹

One of the areas where *vaqf* studies have not made much progress, especially in domestic scholarship, is their gender aspect, a set of issues which has long been an object of interest for researchers worldwide. In the past few years the trend is observable also in Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁰ The

the religious point of view, while the scholarly journal *Anali Gazi-Husrevbegove biblioteke*, also printed in Sarajevo, offers papers devoted to its different aspects.

⁷ See note 6 above.

⁸ Hasan Kaleši, "Prizrenac Kukli-beg i njegove zadužbine", *POF* VIII-IX/1958-59 (1960), 143-168; idem, "Najstarija vakufnama u Jugoslaviji", *POF* X-XI/1960-61 (1961), 55-73; idem, "Jedna arapska vakufnama iz Ohrida iz 1491.godine", *POF* XII-XIII/1962-63 (1965), 15-44; Hasan Kaleši and Ismail Eren, "Prizrenac Mahmud-paša Rotul, njegove zadužbine i vakufname", *Starine Kosova* VI-VII (1972-73), 23-64, etc.

⁹ Hazim Šabanović, "Beograd kao vojno-upravno i privredno središte u XVI-XVII veku" and "Grad i njegovo stanovništvo u XVI-XVII veku", in *Istorija Beograda* (Belgrade 1974), vol. I, 323-422; Dušanka Bojanić, "Niš do velikog rata 1683", in *Istorija Niša* (Niš 1983), vol. I, 107-169; Fotić, "Uloga vakufa"; Dragana Amedoski, "Orijentalne gradjevine Kruševca od osmanskog odvajanja do kraja XVI veka", *Istorijski časopis* LV (2007), 157-169; Tatjana Katić, "Muslimanske zadužbine u Pirotu od XIV do XVI veka", *Pirotski zbornik* 32/33 (2007/8), 55-62; Milan Vasić, "Leskovac u XVI veku", in *Naselja na Balkanskom poluostrvu od XVI do XVIII vijeka* (Istočno Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Republike Srpske, 2005), 7-33; Olga Zirojević, "Leskovac u XV i XVI veku", *Leskovački zbornik* 9 (1969), 165-170; Dragana Amedoski, "Leskovački vakufi u periodu od osmanskog osvajanja do kraja XVI veka", *Istorijski časopis* LVII (2008), 137-149.

¹⁰ Gabriel Baer, "Women and Waqf: An Analysis of the Istanbul Tahrir 1546", *Asian and African Studies* 17, *Studies in the Social History of the Middle East in Memory of Professor Gabriel Baer* (University of Haifa, 1983), 9-28; Hasan Yüksel, "Osmanlı Toplumunda Vakıflar ve Kadın (XVI.-XVII. yüzyıllar)", *Osmanlı* 5 (1999), 49-55; Mary Ann Fay, "Women and Waqf: Toward a Reconsideration of Women's Place in the Mamluk Household", *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)* 29/1 (1997), 33-51; Ronald C. Jennings, "Women in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records - The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri", *JESHO* XVIII/1 (1975), 53-114; M. L. Meriwether, "Women and Waqf Revisited: the Case of Aleppo, 1770-1840", in *Women in the Ottoman Empire. Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, ed. M. C. Zilfi (Leiden-Boston-Cologne 1997), 128-152; Hatidža Čar-Drnda, "Društveni i pravni

lack of systematic study of female endowers in the territory of present-day Serbia provides the opportunity for opening a new and unexplored field of historical studies. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to show that this kind of social activity was pursued in this part of the Balkans and that it played the same role as elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire.

Contrary to the popular notion that the position of women in Ottoman Islamic society was an extremely repressed one, that they were denied participation in public life and access to the economic, financial or legal spheres, the Ottoman socio-political system was such that the woman was treated in her family and her broader community as a person with full civil rights. She was active in the economic and financial areas and in a position to contribute to her community. Thus women were able to establish *vaqfs* using their own property, in order that their personal funds should be used, in accordance with the ethical principles of Islam, for the benefit of the broader community.

Islamic law made it possible, with some limitations, for members of other religions to found endowments according to the rules prescribed by their own religion and before their own religious representatives.¹¹ This kind of social activity included Christian women as well. The sources that we have been able to use for this paper, unfortunately, are limited and do not provide that sort of information.¹² There were Christian women who endowed a field or a meadow¹³ or valuable objects.¹⁴

Muslim women founders of endowments came from different social backgrounds, but most belonged to the upper layers of society, and only about ten percent of *vaqfs* were established by lower-class women.¹⁵ It

položaj žene muslimanke u osmanskoj Bosni”, *Znakovi vremena* 10/37 (2007), 124–153; Kerima Filan, “Women Founders of Pious Endowments”, in Amila Buturović and Irvin Cemil Schick, *Women in the Ottoman Balkans: Gender, Culture and History* (London–New York 2007), 99–121; Hatidža Čar-Drnda, “Vakufski objekti u Bosanskom sandžaku”, *POF* 52–53 (2002/3 [2004]), 267–294, and *passim*.

¹¹ Olga Zirojević, “Hrišćansko zadužbinarstvo u periodu osmanske uprave”, *POF* 46 (1996 [1997]), 131.

¹² For an example of a Christian woman acting as a *vaqif* (in the sense of a classical *vaqfnâme*), see Phokion P. Kotzageorgis, “Two *wakfiyes* of Mara Branković”, *Hilandarski zbornik* 11 (2004), 307–323.

¹³ Aleksandar Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu XV–XVII vek* (Belgrade 2000), 232–234; Aleksandar Fotić, “Concealed Donation or a Sale: The Acquisition of Monastic Property (15th–17th C.)”, *XIV. Türk Tarih Kongresi (Ankara, 9–13 Eylül 2002). Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, II. Cilt – I. Kısım (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 2005), 721–728.

¹⁴ Several cases in Vladislav Skarić, “Srpski pravoslavni narod i crkva u Sarajevu u 17. i 18. vijeku”, *Prilozi za istoriju Sarajeva*, vol. II of *Izabrana djela*, ed. Milorad Ekmečić (Sarajevo 1985), 5–58.

¹⁵ Yüksel, “Osmanlı Toplumunda”, 52.

should be noted that women *vaqfs* were mostly concentrated in the capital of the Ottoman Empire. As a matter of fact, in the middle of the sixteenth century thirty-seven percent of all *vaqfs* in Istanbul were founded by women. One of the first mosques by the most famous Ottoman architect, *Mimar Sinân*, was built on behalf of a woman.¹⁶ Women from high society, most of all sultans' wives and court ladies, were able to undertake large-scale projects, such as mosques, palaces, summer houses on the Bosphorus, but there also were small-scale undertakings like fountains.¹⁷

The kind of property endowed by women can be described as urban (commercial and residential) and agricultural. It included homes, houses and lots, shops, flour mills, gardens, arable land. Briefly, women owned and endowed all manner of income-producing property.¹⁸

The average woman in the Ottoman Empire generally endowed cash *vaqfs*,¹⁹ occasionally a house. Large-scale construction projects were not normally undertaken by women, in the first place because they involved finding a master builder and overseeing construction works.²⁰ Women usually did not earn their livelihood by themselves, but according to the Qur'an and Shariyat they had the right to a part of their husbands' income. Besides, they could be given a cash gift from their husbands, fathers, brothers etc., and they could use it for God-pleasing deeds.²¹ The *mebr* was also a way for a woman to obtain some money of her own. It may be concluded, therefore, that their financial strength was generally limited. Even so, a brief look at the historical sources containing this kind of information shows that property ownership was not exclusive to the women from elite society. Research work for different areas and periods has made it possible to establish the proportion of women among endowers, showing that women accounted for an average of 20–50 percent of the total number of endowers.²²

¹⁶ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı kültürü ve gündelik yaşam: Ortaçağ'dan Yirminci Yüzyıla* (Istanbul 2005), 133, 153.

¹⁷ In the period we are concerned with, sultana Hurrem was an especially generous endower. *Mimar Sinân* built for her a mosque, a *medrese* and many other structures. She had many *hâns* and '*imârets* built in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Other sultans' wives and mothers are also known to have excelled in this activity. Cf. Faroqhi, *Osmanlı kültürü*, 133.

¹⁸ Fay, "Women and Waqf", 38.

¹⁹ On cash *vaqfs* see Murat Çizakça, "Cash Waqfs of Bursa, 1555–1823", *JESHO* 38/3 (1995), 313–354; Jon E. Mandaville, "Usurious piety: the cash waqf controversy in the Ottoman Empire", *IJMES* 10 (1979), 289–308.

²⁰ Faroqhi, *Osmanlı kültürü*, 133.

²¹ Čar-Drnda, "Društveni i pravni položaj žene", 129–130.

²² For different regions and periods, see Baer, "Women and Waqf", 10.

Many of the women of average means who founded *vaqfs* were widowed or had no family of their own. By founding a *vaqf* they wanted to make sure that their property would go for charity purposes rather than to state coffers. This type of women endowers usually stipulated that *vaqf* beneficiaries should read certain suras from the Qur'an and pray for their souls in return,²³ but there were also women whose motivation for endowing a *vaqf* was only social and cultural.²⁴

Some historians share Gabriel Baer's view that women endowed *vaqfs* in order to protect their property and the income it produced (from encroachment by their own husbands and their husbands' families). The endowed property produced income they could enjoy during their lifetime and dispose of as they preferred.²⁵ In the sixteenth century some kind of tradition related to women *vaqfs* became widespread in the Ottoman Empire. Namely, women endowed money for salaries of imams, *müezzins* and other mosque employees in order that certain sections (*cüz*) of the Qur'an should be read for their souls on certain occasions,²⁶ especially during the month of Ramadan. In that way they provided some funding for an already existing mosque. This might be an interesting fact since the usual amount endowed by women was about 3,000 *akçes*, as evidenced by the *vaqf* registers for the Sanjak of Kruševac, and that was the case in other areas too, for instance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, women seem to have given precedence to religious needs over material things (the amount would have been sufficient for building a *mekteb* or a house or a shop).²⁷

In the Sanjak of Kruševac and adjacent sanjaks, *vaqfs* were generally endowed by women related to important local persons such as begs; in Kruševac, for example, they were begs' wives or sisters. Besides, this kind of active role in supporting a Muslim community was characteristic of women from profoundly religious families. Among Shariyat court records, which generally constitute a particularly rich source of information, *vaqfnâmes* are the most relevant source for women *vaqfs* and women's activities connected to *vaqfs*.²⁸ Unfortunately, court records for the territory of modern Serbia have not survived. We have therefore been left with the only available source

²³ Yüksel, "Osmanlı Toplumunda", 54.

²⁴ Ibid., 54.

²⁵ Baer, "Women and Waqf", 27.

²⁶ Yüksel, "Osmanlı Toplumunda", 54.

²⁷ Čar-Drnda, "Društveni i pravni položaj žene", 129.

²⁸ During our research in the State Archives in Istanbul we have not found any *vaqfnâme* referring to the Sanjak of Kruševac.

for this issue: the *vaqf* registers for the Sanjak of Kruševac.²⁹ They provide scanty information, but nevertheless confirm that this type of Islamic institution did exist in the Sanjak of Kruševac.

These registers recorded women *vaqfs* only in Kruševac and Leskovac. Kruševac had four female benefactors. One of them, Şâhmânî Hâtûn, wife of a certain Dâvud Beg, endowed a sum of 2,800 *akçes*. The interest charged on this sum, one *akçe* a day, was intended for the *müe'zzin* of the most honourable mosque, the one built by the Sultan Murât II (1421–1444, 1446–1451),³⁰ the first conqueror of Kruševac. The mosque was the centre of spiritual and cultural life in Ottoman Kruševac. The *müe'zzin* had the daily obligation to read the Qur'an for the soul of the endower. The *vaqf* was managed with the same funds and in the same way until 1570.³¹

Fâtîma Hâtûn, sister of Şa'bân Beg, endowed 3,000 *akçes* for pious purposes. Given his generous gifts for charity, Şa'bân Beg must have been a prominent person in Kruševac.³² Fâtîma intended the money for the *mesjid* of Mustafâ b. Kulâk. One *akçe* from the interest earned on this sum was to be given every day to an imam in the *mesjid* in order that he should pray for the endower's soul.³³

Şâhbola Hâtûn endowed the same *mesjid*, founded in the Kruševac *mahalle* of İyâs, with a sum of 3,000 *akçes*. The income received from interest was to be used for the salary of the imam of the *mesjid*, one *akçe* a day, who was to read selected *cüzes* on her behalf.³⁴

²⁹ There are four registers for the Sanjak of Kruševac in the State Archives in Istanbul (Başbakanlık Arşivi [BBA], Istanbul, *Tapu Tabrir Defterleri* [TTD]) that contain the registers of *vaqfs*: *TTD 167*, of the year 1530, which has been published (*167 numaralı muhâsebe-i vilâyet- Rûm-ili defteri (937/1530)*, II, *Vilçitrim, Prizrin, Alaca-bisâr ve Hersek Livâaları* (Dizin ve Tıpkıbasım), Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı Yayın Nu: 69, Defter-i Hâkânî Dizisi: IX, Ankara 2004); *TTD 179*, for the year 1536; *TTD 161*, made during the reign of Sultan Süleymân I (1520–1566); and *TTD 567* for the period about 1570. Only two of them, *TTD 179* (735–741) and *TTD 567* (424–432), contain information about women *vaqfs*.

³⁰ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâmesi* (Istanbul 1978), vol. V, 1836, mentioned this mosque, but mistakenly connected it with Sultan Murât I Hüdavendigâr (1326–1389).

³¹ *TD 179*, 740; *TD 567*, 425.

³² Şab'an Beg endowed the building which housed the town court in Kruševac and associated buildings used by the *kadi*. The so-called Court *mahalle* formed around them (*TD 567*, 33). The *vaqf* included stables, two houses, one barn and one meadow. The funds of the *vaqf* consisted of 2,500 *akçes* in cash and the income from one mill and one meadow. The endower stipulated that food should be provided to wayfarers and travelers and their horses (*TD 179*, 741; *TD 567*, 426).

³³ *TD 179*, 740; *TD 567*, 425.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

The *vaqf* of Âyişe Hâtûn bt. Hamza, wife of Halâci Mustafâ, consisted of a mill on the river Rasina, which she endowed for the abovementioned *mescid* of Mustafâ b. Kulâk.³⁵ Judging by what was the usual practice, the mill was probably rented out. The income was to be used for the maintenance of the *mescid* and for the salary of the imam, one *akçe* a day, who was required to pray for her on certain occasions.³⁶

It was not uncommon for several women to endow the same religious institution with a cash *vaqf*. It is possible that there was some particular belief associated with the *mescid* of Mustafâ b. Kulâk that induced women to endow it with money.

By 1570 Leskovac had had two women *vaqfs*. One was the *vaqf* of Güle Hâtûn, wife of Hâci Hayruddîn, which included a sum of 2,000 *akçes*, intended for extending loans at Shariyat-compliant interest, and a shop, which was to be rented out for 60 *akçes* a year. The income, or 360 *akçes* a year, Güle intended for the *müezzins* of the Sultan Bâyezîd's mosque who were to pray for her soul. The rest, 100 *akçes* from interest, Güle intended for the *vakf* manager (*mütevelli*). Besides, she endowed the mosque with arable land and pastures located between the villages of Donje Stopanje, Vinarce and Bobište.³⁷ Güle Hâtûn's endowment shows that women in sixteenth-century Ottoman Kruševac owned agricultural land, the type of property on which the self-sufficiency and integrity of the traditional Muslim family depended more than on anything else. Besides, she could purchase, sell or endow land, which is a highly revealing fact about the role of women in the economic and social life of the town.

The other women *vakf* in Leskovac was that of Abâz Hâtûn. She established a cash *vaqf* of 7,000 *akçes* to be lent to borrowers. With 12 *akçes* paid back for 10 *akçes* borrowed, the *vaqf* yielded an annual income of 1,400 *akçes*. Abâz Hâtûn stipulated that it should be spent in the following way: a daily wage of 1.5 *akçes* for the *müezzin* of the new mosque who was obliged to read one *cüz* for her soul every day; one *akçe* a day for the manager of the *vaqf*; 150 *akçes* a year for the purpose of reciting *mevlûd*;³⁸ and 40 *akçes* a year for the illumination of the mosque.³⁹ There might have been a few

³⁵ By then the *mescid* had already had one mill and two millstones on the river Rasina, near the village of Makrešane, endowed by the *mescid* founder himself (*TD* 179, 740).

³⁶ *TD* 179, 740; *TD* 567, 425.

³⁷ *TD* 567, 428.

³⁸ The *mevlûd* recitations were frequently stipulated by *vaqf* founders, based on ayah 152 of sura Al-Baqara: "Therefore, remember Me, and I shall remember you, and accept My right and do not be ungrateful to Me!"

³⁹ *TD* 567, 430.

more women *vaqfs* in the Sanjak of Kruševac in the period under study, but our limited sources provide no conclusive evidence.

Apart from being *vaqf* founders, sometimes women were heiresses to family *vaqfs* (*ailevî, evlâtlık*) or to *vaqfs* which were a combination of a family and a *hayri vaqf* (*vaqf* for public benefit). For example, Aydin Beg b. Yûsuf bequeathed by the Shariyat-compliant *vakfnâme* his family *vaqf* which consisted of two houses in Leskovac, a courtyard and a garden, to his male children. After their death he intended it for his daughters and their children, and upon the death of all family members, the *vaqf* was to go to a scholar who would perform certain religious rituals.⁴⁰

There were a few more family *vaqfs* in Leskovac in the sixteenth century, but all of them showed characteristics of *hayri vaqfs* as well. One such *vakf* was that of Hâcî 'Âlî. One part of its income was intended for his family, the other for charitable purposes. The total sum endowed amounted to 10,300 *akçes*; in addition, he endowed a shop, a meadow, a vineyard and a garden. The founder stipulated that the money should be used for lending loans. The income from the shop, meadow, vineyard and garden was intended for his daughters Hanife and Emîne.⁴¹

Cafer 'Abdullâh founded a *vaqf* in such a way that the cash part was intended as a *hayri vaqf*, while the part consisting of a house in Leskovac was to be a family *vaqf* for the benefit of his wife Güle bt. Mehmed. Upon the death of all family members, the house was to be given to the poor.⁴²

Dervîş Mehmed b. 'Abdülhay intended a part of the income yielded by the endowed *vaqf* to his female descendants.⁴³

What is also quite clear from the surviving Ottoman documents is that, at least as far as Shariyat courts were concerned, the Islamic law of inheritance was strictly implemented. Namely, wherever a woman is referred to as an heiress of the deceased, whether a wife or a daughter, she is also included in the list of those getting their share of the inheritance.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, this is not conclusive proof that the property actually passed into the hands of women.

Compared with the Sanjak of Kruševac, the situation with women *vaqfs* in the sixteenth century is more or less the same in the surrounding sanjaks. In the Sanjak of Smederevo (Semendire) there are no women *vaqfs*

⁴⁰ Ibid., 430. Unfortunately, some founded *vaqfs* in order to be able to leave their property entirely to their male descendants. Cf. Yüksel, "Osmanlı Toplumunda", 51.

⁴¹ TD 567, 428.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Haim Gerber, "Social and Economic Position of Women in an Ottoman City, Bursa, 1600–1700", *IJMES* 12 (1980), 232.

registered in 1516 and 1521/23.⁴⁵ In the Sanjak of Ohrid (Ohri) there were only two women *vaqfs* in 1583.⁴⁶ The Sanjak of Prizren had five women endowments in 1571,⁴⁷ and in 1530 there were no women founders of endowments in the *Kazâ* of Pirot.⁴⁸ The only exception in the period is Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, according to the 1565 register, there were more than thirty women *vaqfs*.⁴⁹

Another interesting phenomenon, and a little studied one, is that of group *vaqfs*, founded either by two or more women, or by related women and men (husbands, brothers, sons). *Vaqfs* jointly founded by unrelated men and women were rare.⁵⁰

Besides being founders and inheritresses of *vaqfs*, women were sometimes appointed to an office, such as that of the *nazîr* or *mütevelli* of a *vaqf*.⁵¹

* * *

Women's involvement in endowment activity was still at an early stage in the sixteenth-century Sanjak of Kruševac and its neighbourhood. But, the very existence of women *vaqfs* warns that they should not be overlooked in studying the role this institution played in Ottoman society. Judging by the surviving Ottoman documents, women figured as property owners and *vaqf* founders much less frequently than men. Most women founders of endowments in the Sanjak of Kruševac were wives or relatives of begs or some other prominent persons. The average cash endowment was about 3,000 *akçes*, and it was generally intended for loan lending. The interest charged on loans was usually intended for imams or other employees of a particular mosque or *mescid*, who in turn were required to pray for the soul of the endower. Such endowments may be described as a trend among upper-class

⁴⁵ *TTD* 1007, 201–203; *TTD* 135, 62–63.

⁴⁶ *Opširen popisen defter na Obridskiot sandzhak od 1583. godina*, vol. VIII/2 of *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod*, ed. Aleksandar Stojanovski (Skopje 2000), 621–622.

⁴⁷ Tatjana Katić, “Opširni popis Prizrenskog sandžaka iz 1571” (Belgrade), 535, 538–539, forthcoming.

⁴⁸ Katić, “Muslimanske zadužbine u Pirotu”.

⁴⁹ For the women *vaqfs* registered in the Sanjak of Bosnia in 1565, see Čar-Drnda, “Društveni i pravni položaj žene”.

⁵⁰ Fay, “Women and Waqf”, 38. Fay looks into the Cairo examples, but there is no doubt that this was a widely accepted practice in the Ottoman Empire.

⁵¹ Yüksel, “Osmanlı Toplumunda”, 51.

women, while other types of women endowments seem to have been quite rare.

Unfortunately, the Ottoman documentary material of relevance to the territory of modern-day Serbia appears to be quite scanty, and our considerations have been limited by the only available sources. It is therefore important to pay greater attention to all aspects of the role of women in everyday community life in Ottoman Serbia. That kind of research would hopefully further our understanding of the position of women in Islam through history.

UDC 94(497.11:560)15"
347.232.1:316.323.4-055.2

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