

Architectural Structure and Functions of the *Külliye* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa in Sofia with a Special Focus on its *Medrese* and *Kütüphane**

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Abstract

During the Ottoman rule, especially in its early centuries, high-ranking officers founded large *waqf* establishments which provided free education, health care and protection and served as poor-relief social institutions. One of these multifunctional complexes which served the whole Muslim community was founded in the center of the European province *Rumeli* by Sofu Mehmed Paşa, an Ottoman governor during the reign of Sultan Süleyman I. The *waqf külliye* in Sofia, designed by the great architect Mimar Sinan, comprised a Friday Mosque, a *medrese* with a manuscript *library*, a *caravanserai* and guest-houses, a *bath-house*, a *hospice*, a *public kitchen*, a *bakery* with *storerooms*. Various archival sources from the 17th - mid-19th centuries, provided rich data about its role in the economic, socio-cultural development and everyday life of the population and the guests of Sofia. The available data also enables Sofu Mehmed Paşa's *medrese* and its significance in the Ottoman education system to be examined.

Keywords: Sofu Mehmed Paşa, Sofia, külliye, medrese, manuscript library

Sofya'daki Sofu Mehmed Paşa Külliyesi'nin Medresesi ve Kütüphanesi Özelinde Mimari Yapısı ve İşlevleri

Öz

Osmanlı idaresi döneminde, özellikle bu idarenin ilk yüzyıllarında, üst düzey yetkililer kentlerde belirli kişilere ücretsiz eğitim, koruma ve barınma sağlayan büyük vakıflar kurmuşlardır. Bu vakıflar kentsel yerleşim yerlerin sosyal ve ekonomik hayatında önemli rol oynamaktadırlar. Bunların arasında Kanuni Sultan Süleyman döneminde (1520-1566) bir Osmanlı valisi olan Sofu Mehmed Paşa tarafından Sofya'da kurulan külliye de vardır. Ünlü Mimar Sinan tarafından tasarlanmış bu külliye cuma cami, medrese, medreseye bağlı kütüphane, kervansaray, hamam, bir darülaceze, bir imaret mutfağı ve depoları ile bir fırından oluşuyordu. 17'nci yüzyıldan 19'uncu yüzyılın ortalarına kadar uzanan çeşitli arşiv kaynakları, bu külliyenin Sofya'nın ekonomik ve sosyo-kültürel gelişimi, halkın günlük yaşamındaki rolü ve Sofya'ya gelen misafirler hakkında zengin veriler sunmaktadır. Bu kaynaklardan elde edilen bilgiler, Sofu Mehmed Paşa'nın hem medresesinin hem de medresenin Osmanlı eğitim sistemindeki önemini incelenmesine de olanak sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sofu Mehmed Paşa, Sofya, külliye, medrese, elyazmaları kütüphanesi

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Introduction

The central part of Rumeli was a region where Christians were more than a half of the population but Muslims prevailed in the cities and towns. There is rich source material evidencing the widespread practice of donation not just by the Ottoman dignitaries but also by the people of the lower strata of the Ottoman society (Ivanova, 2005: 44-68; Kiel, 1990: 80-84). Because of its function as the capital city of Rumeli and the seat of a vast administrative apparatus, Sofia received the attention of all branches of government. The building activity in Sofia in the 16th century turned it into a Muslim center with numerous religious, social and economic functions.

Among the largest and most significant waqf complexes in the central Balkans was the *külliye* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa in Sofia which consisted of a Friday Mosque, a *medrese* with a manuscript *library*, a *caravanserai* and guest-houses, a *bath-house*, a *hospice*, a *public kitchen*, a *bakery* with *storerooms* designed by the great Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan (Andonova, 2020). The Friday Mosque in the *külliye* was the largest single-domed mosque in the Balkans beyond Edirne (Necipoğlu, 2005: 391). The *medrese* with its manuscript library comprised of 16 cells and provided education to 15 students (*talebe*). In comparison to other *medreses* located in towns and cities in the Bulgarian lands during 15th – 17th century it is obvious that Sofu Mehmed Paşa's *medrese* was the largest one.

The present paper will provide information about the buildings in the Ottoman vizier's complex and their services but the main focus will be on the *medrese* with its *library* as one of the most important institutions where the Muslims were trained for the *kadi*, *mufti* or *müderris* profession. It was the center which served the educated community, the future *ulema*. Comparing the data derived from various archival sources related to the waqf establishment I will try to investigate the architectural structure, symbolism and function of the *medrese*, as well as, to give some information about the rank of the school and its *müderrises*, the educational system and the students. Furthermore, the documents present a part of the collection of the manuscripts preserved in the library which give us an opportunity to reconstruct the basic disciplines included in the educational system. The emergence of Sofu Mehmed Paşa's complex in the center of Rumeli in 1540s and the *medrese* which trained *ulema* as guardians of the *şer'at* were significant elements of the state policy during the rule of Sultan Süleyman I.

Sources related to the Külliye of Sofu Mehmed Paşa in Sofia

There are various documents preserved in the Oriental department at the St. St. Cyril and Methodius National Library (Sofia) and in the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Istanbul) which provide data regarding the *waqf* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa in Sofia from its establishment in 1540s until 1874 which coincides with the time by which the mosque complex provided service to its beneficiaries.

The earliest and one of the most fundamental archival documents is the *wakfname* (*wakfiyye*, *wakfname* - deed of donation). The document at our disposal is a copy (*sûret-i wakfiyye-i*) dated from 1285 (1868) of the Arabic *wakfiyye* (VGMA, 988: 525-551) of the donor, registered in January 1548. It provides data of the founder's intentions, expectations and ideology, the conditions for the administration of the waqf, the properties which revenues were used to meet the need of the waqf, the *waqf* employees, their duties and salaries, the services which were to be performed and the beneficiaries. The exact place and borderlines of the complex and its dependences are given in details. However, the *wakfiyye* does not provide information about the economic development and activities of the pious waqf.

These functions can be traced thanks to the *muhasebe defters* (income-expenditure account books). Here two registers which embrace the period between 1616 and 1621 should be mentioned (BOA, MAD.d. 4945; NBKM, OrO, D62: 127r-131r). They contain detailed and summary lists of the sums and sources of the *waqf* revenues, the expenditures for salaries, services and repair works, the positions and the names of the people employed in or benefiting from the *waqf*. They permit us to trace not only the financial situation of the *waqf* and its properties in this period of time, but also the changes in the staff, their salaries, the number of the employees and beneficiaries, the kind and amount of the food served in the public kitchen, as well as the expenses made for the charitable, religious and educational services.

Another *account book* which covers a long period between 1693 and 1709 submits for consideration the time of the possible *waqf* decline when the mosque and the *imaret* did not provide service due to destructions (NBKM, OrO 1/15110). The first sheets of the defter are missing and it begins with the list of some books preserved at the *medrese* library following with the repair works made for the *medrese's* reconstruction in 1109 (July 1697- July 1698). Although the account book includes several additional notes in illustration to the reasons of the financial difficulties and explanations of the bad condition of the *imaret*, the main causes which affected the buildings in the complex remain unclear.

Architectural Structure of Sofu Mehmed Paşa's Complex and the Services of its Institutions

Sofu Mehmed Paşa was an Ottoman statesman during the reign of sultan Süleyman I (1520-1566). He served as a *beylerbey* of Rumeli between 941/1534-35 and 944/1537-38 (Süreyya, 1971: 113). The Paşa became *fourth vizier* in 1538 and in 1539 he was probably *third vizier* (Necipoğlu, 2005:390). After the third conquest of Buda in 1541 Sofu Mehmed Paşa became *second vizier* and it is possible that in 1548 he had already become *vizier* (Andonova, 2020: 20). Before his death in 958/1551 the Paşa was governor of Baghdad, *beylerbey* of Bosnia (Sarajevo) and governor of Buda (Süreyya, 1971: 113).

According to the *waqf* inscription of the mosque, preserved in the Bulgarian Archaeological Museum the inauguration of the mosque was in 954/ 1547-48 (Eren, 1968:70). The studies about Sofu Mehmed Paşa's compound also give 954 as the date of completion for the *mosque*, the *medrese* and the *imaret* (Necipoğlu, 2005: 390; Eren, 1968: 70; Kiel, 1990: 118).

The whole complex was defined as *imaret* in the *waqfiyye*. The term is essentially a soup kitchen but in the early Ottoman period it embraced the complex (Kuran, 1987: 132). The endowment deed supplies us with detailed and valuable information about the location and borderlines of the *küllüye* (VGMA, 988: 528). It was located on an empty plot in a plain (*dere*) called Pınarcık, outside the center of the city. Along its east side passed the *Gazi Yölu* (the road of the Ghazis, nowadays the boulevard "Tsarigradsko shose"). On the south it bordered on a bridge located along the public road which started from the plain. On the north side an empty plot which belonged to the *waqf* of Hac Sinan, and two *mülk* plots – one into the possession of the sons of Durmuş son of Ali, and another one - of Iliyas' wife Emra daughter of Abdullah. Along its west side passed another public road (nowadays Graf Ignatiev Street) which led to the *zâviye* of Elşeyh Bali dede (Moutafova et al. 1998: 231).

After the location and borderlines of the whole complex the *waqfname* describes the exact place of each separate building. In the inner courtyard of the Friday mosque (*cami-i şerif*) which had a high arch and a lead-plated dome was ranged the *mescid* (a small mosque). It was noted that both of them were

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ranged in a line facing each other. The courtyard of the mosque was planted with trees and had a marble water-basin with a fountain (*şadravan*) in the middle. The *şadravan* was covered by a gabled roof in a pyramid form in order to protect it from the sun and rain (VGMA, 988: 528). According to Evliya Çelebi the mosque had a lofty dome like sultan's mosques and an extremely spacious courtyard. The domes on top of all the columns are covered with indigo blue lead, the minaret was high and well-proportioned (Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâme, 1984: 218). The Italian doctor Antonio Benetti also described the mosque: it had architraves of stone in the Roman fashion and a dome on top and around, firmly mounted on a circle, which is inserted in the quadrangle of the mosque (Viaggi a Costantinopoli di Gio, 1688: 180). The researchers noted that it was called also the Imaret Mosque or Black Mosque (Kara Cami) because of its black granite walls (Necipoğlu, 2005:391, Eren, 1968: 68). It was covered by a dome of 18,3 meters wide (VGMA, 988: 528).

At the north side of the mosque courtyard the *medrese* which comprised of 16 cells was founded. According to the *waqfiyye* it provided education to 15 students (*talebe*). The endowment deed mentions a *manuscript library* which was not a separate building. It was a part of the *medrese* situated in one of its corners on the second floor (VGMA, 988: 528).

As Evliya Çelebi mentioned the *imaret khan* in Sofia also belonged to Sofu Mehmed. According to him the *imaret* was the most famous in Sofia and was open for the rich and the poor (Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâme, 1984: 219). According to the data included in the *waqfiyye* on the east and west sides of the complex courtyard there were 4 separate buildings called *tābkhāna wa istabl*. On the east side on the passage to the mosque *qibla* wall was the *tābkhāna* with a benefit of help for the extremely needed (*gayet mutebe*) to find a warm shelter (VGMA, 988: 528).

Ismail Eren defines this *tābkhāna* as *bimarhane* (hospital) (Eren, 968: 70). There is a possible translation of the term *tābkhāna* as hospital or mental hospital but the sources do not supply us with data of medical staff which could provide service in such an institution. As a "winter" or "hot room" that had chimneys to eliminate the smoke from winter fires the *tābkhāna* in the Anatolian buildings is described by Sheila Blair. The author notes that the term came to mean hospice during the Ottoman period (2012: 71-72). Aptullah Kuran (1987: 132) also translates the *tābkhāna* in the complexes from the 16th century as a *hospice* which is more possible definition for the building included in the *külliye* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa. Gülru Necipoğlu (2005: 391) mentions a guest-house and a caravanserai (*tābkhāna wa istabl*) without any interpretation of their specific functions. According to the author's description all these buildings were behind the *qibla* wall of the mosque. Actually, as we will see it is not the exact location (Andonova, 2020a: 38).

In 1680 the Italian doctor Antonio Benetti gave a very detailed description of the *imaret*. He wrote that Mehmed Paşa had constructed in Sofia 'a hospital or a college which was called here Imaret for (*Infermi poveri*)¹ the poor sick people, and as a seminary for students of law and the Mohammedan religion' (Viaggi a Costantinopoli di Gio, 1688: 180).

Having in mind the additional explanation of the purposes of that *tābkhāna* given in the *waqfiyye*, the descriptions of the travelers and the possible translations and functions of the term, it is possible to define this building as a *hospice* where the extremely poor people who had no means either for living

1 The term *infermi poveri* as a social group which included the poor, the sick and the needy corresponds to what in the *waqfiyye* was noted as *gayet mutebe* (literally - extremely weakened).

or for treatment (both the miserable and sick) were accommodated and were provided with food, care and treatment.

On the west side of the previous *tābkhāna* there was another *tābkhāna* which consisted of two similar and facing each other buildings. According to the data included in the *waqfiyye* these buildings were designed for the travelers and guests (VGMA, 988: 528). On another page of the *endowment deed* it was written that there were 24 tables four-seated each of them on which the guests were served dinner (VGMA, 988: 549). It means that at least 96 guests could be accommodated in the *caravanserai*. There was also a stable (*istabl*) for the horses. In the mid-seventeenth century Evliya Çelebi described the *caravanserai* in which 100 horses could be housed which corresponds to the above calculated number of the guests (Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâme, 1984: 219).

In 1587 Reinhold Lubenau explained that a fine new *caravanserai*, built of large blocks of stone and with finely cut pillars, covered with lead stood on the opposite side of the mosque. He describes different kind of food which was served free to every stranger (Kiel, 1990: 118). In the description of Henri Blount from 1636 the complex is mentioned as a magnificent college (a complex)² which had stately khans or caravanserais and exquisite baths and the principal one had a hot fountain (1636:17). The *caravanserai* is also described in Antonio Benetti's work from 1680 where it is mentioned as a *khan* divided into two apartments (probably two buildings) with marble pillars and domes all covered with lead. They were located in a second square courtyard 30 feet in length with a beautiful fountain also lead-covered in the center (Viaggi a Costantinopoli di Gio, 1688: 180-181).

The travelers mention the *imaret hamam* (a bath-house) without describing its location. Such data misses in the *waqfiyye*, too. The account books from the 17th century (BOA, MAD.d. 4945: 119; NBKM, OrO, D62: 128r) mention that in 1615 the *hamam* and the water-conduit were repaired but no data at our disposal for its location.

On the north side (of the second courtyard) behind the *medrese* (on its opposite side) there was a public kitchen (*matbah*) for the needed people with nine partitions (*hiwal*). And on its east side the bakery (*hibiz*) for the needs of the *matbah* was located. The storerooms (*kilâr*) were on the kitchen's west side (VGMA, 988: 528). In the text is noted that there were storerooms (*kilâr*) for cereals and such for the meat. The menu of the kitchen was mostly *fodûla* (a special cake of fine, white flour) and çorba (soup), wheat gruel and meat - beef and lamb. There is no particular information about the beneficiaries in the document (BOA, MAD.d. 4945: 118-119.) But summarizing the figures given in the archival sources we can conclude that the soup kitchen provided food for totally 310 – 360 people among who 96 guests of the caravanserai, 73 employees, 15 students and between 110 and 160 poor and needy people (Andonova, 2019:779).

Besides, the waqfname explains that behind the *medrese* an empty plot for the storage of the firewood was situated. There were 20 toilets (*kenef*) – 10 for the staff in the kitchen, bakery and store-houses, and 10 more for the people in the *medrese* and for the visitors of the rest complex buildings (VGMA, 988: 528).

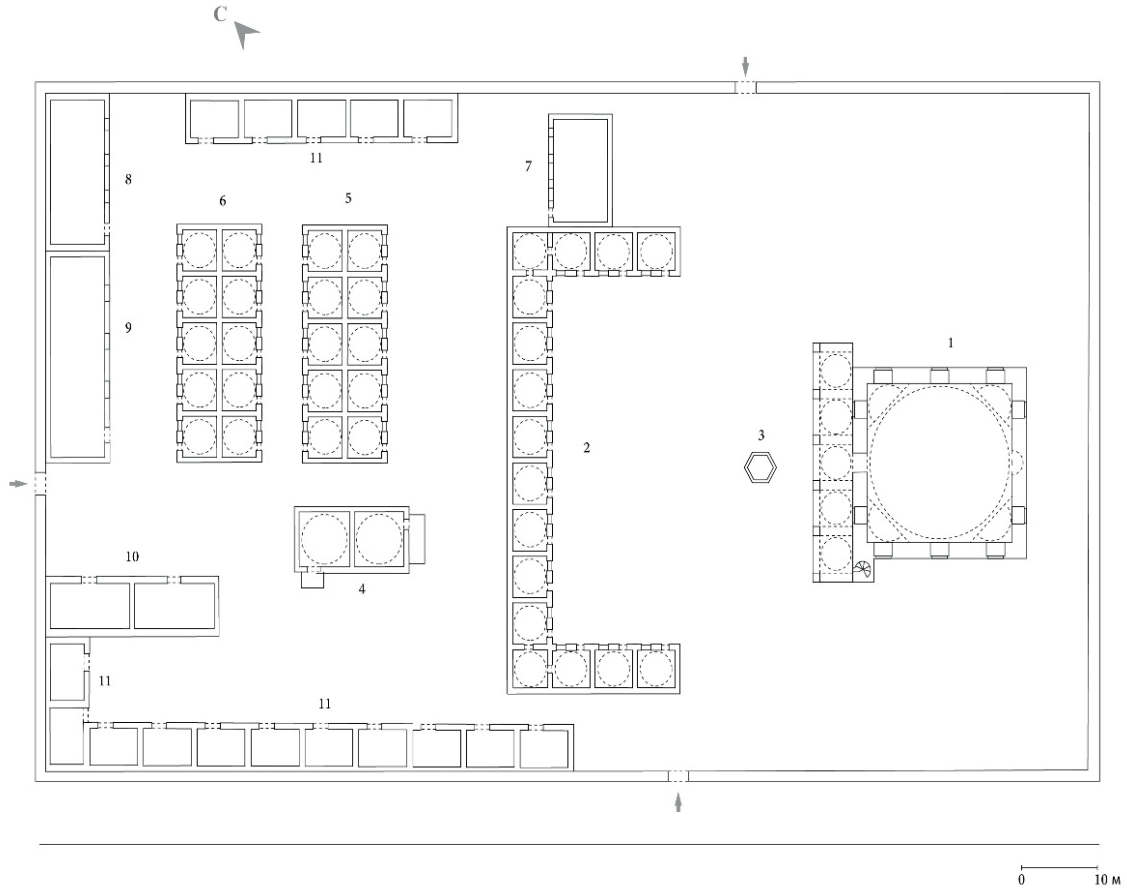
The whole complex described in the *waqfiyye* as *imaret* was open before the *Sabah namaz* and closed after the *Yatsı namaz* and four doorkeepers (*kapıcı*) were responsible for that – one for the *medrese*,

² In the 17th century the term 'collegio' embraced a building used for educational or religious purposes and corresponded to what in the Ottoman Empire was called *Imaret* (complex).

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another one for the mosque and two for the public kitchen and for the khan (VGMA, 988: 527). The caravanserai, the hospice and the public kitchen operated in close proximity to accommodation for guests and the needy, provided fodder to their animals and also fed them.

On the basis of this valuable data derived from the *waqfname*, compared with the information given in other sources, I tried to elaborate a plan of the whole complex with the exact or hypothetical place of each separate building (Picture 1).



Picture 1. Hypothetical plan of Sofu Mehmed Paşa's külliye

Legend:

- | | | |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 1. Friday Mosque | 5. Han | 9. Public kitchen |
| 2. Medrese | 6. Han | 10. Storerooms |
| 3. Şadrvan | 7. Hospice | 11. Stable |
| 4. Hamam | 8. Bakery | |

The reconstruction confirms that Sofu Mehmed Paşa investigated in a really large *waqf* complex. The buildings were symmetrically organized around the Friday mosque and comprised a unit with various socio-cultural, religious and educational functions. It will be nice a comparison with other *külliyes* designed by Sinan to be made although they were mainly in Istanbul or in other regions. Just in brief I will mention that none of the investigated by Aptullah Kuran complexes of Sultan Süleyman I, his

family-members, and Ottoman dignitaries in Istanbul, Edirne, Üsküdar, Damascus, designed by Mimar Sinan was similar to the others. Maybe the fountain-court was the most typical in the architectural composition and the U-shaped *medrese* which could be found in most of the *medreses'* structure. One of the reasons of their differences in the location and design was related to the surface on which they were constructed (in a flat plain or on a slope) (Kuran, 1987: 132-139). The design of the complex of Sultan Süleyman I in Damascus was probably the most comparable to that of Sofu Mehmed Paşa in Sofia. Aptullah Kuran defined it as the most balanced and totally symmetrical building complex. He also mentioned that it was executed on a flat plot of land. The *waqf* compound in Sofia was also located in a plain which can be a precondition for the symmetrical location of the buildings in the compound.

It is obvious that the *külliye* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa was one of the largest complexes built by Ottoman dignitaries which existed during 15th – 17th centuries in the Bulgarian lands. In Istanbul the largest complexes belonged to the sultans but in the Balkans the *külliye* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa was one of the greatest ever created.

The research on the emergence of the complex gives evidence of a synchronization between the activities of Sofu Mehmed Paşa from the position of Rumeli beylerbey and an Ottoman vizier and of the famous Halveti Şeyh Bali Efendi, as one of the most zealous defenders of orthodox Islam and a leader of one of the brotherhoods tolerated by the sultans, who constructed a *zâviye* on the same "Samokovsko chaussée" near the imaret. The chronology of the *waqf* and the territorial proximity of the *zâviye* of Bali Efendi in Sofia and the imaret of Mehmed Paşa, suggest that, by constructing the *zâviye*, the complex, and the mahalle around them in the suburban space, Bali Efendi and Sofu Mehmed Paşa helped not only to shape the architectural appearance, urbanization, and Ottomanization of Sofia, but also contributed to the promotion and spread of Islam in the city (Andonova, 2020b: 548-552). Their actions coincided with the religious policy of Sultan Süleyman I.

As a representative of the central and provincial authorities, Sofu Mehmed was probably also engaged in a state-led policy to impose a more rigorous sunnitization of Islam. The indirect connection with the Sufism, which is referred to in the sources (for the appointment of dervishes as employees in his religious *waqf*, and his very name „Sofi“), was most likely with those approved and supported by the state. We can suppose that the imaret became a key place for the spread and protection of orthodox Islam.

The Medrese of Sofu Mehmed Paşa in Sofia

Located in the center of the European province Sofu Mehmed Paşa's medrese occupied an important place in Süleyman's reforms of the educational system and in the actions of the expansion and enhancement of the personnel and judgments of the ulema in state service (Zilfi, 1993: 111-113). It was on the north side of the mosque courtyard and its 16 domed cells formed a U-shaped building which faced to the front elevation of the Friday Mosque. From an architectural point of view the high school represented a detached building included in a large architectural complex (Eyce, 1997: 116-118). The documents attest to a manuscript library as part of its construction and describe a list of some of the books preserved there (NBKM, OrO, 1/15110: 1a).

In comparison to other *medreses* located in towns and cities in the Bulgarian lands during 15th – 17th century it is obvious that Sofu Mehmed Paşa's *medrese* was the largest one. Approximately 80 % of the

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total 19 *high-schools* investigated in the Bulgarian historiography were buildings with no more than 9 cells. Those with ten or more represented only 20 % among which were the *medrese* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa and the *medrese* in Şehabeddin's waqf complex in Plovdiv. It is also accepted that the number of the cells corresponded to the number of the students who studied in the *medrese* (Sabev, 2001: 126-127). Thus, the *medrese* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa was pointed as one of the few high schools in the towns and cities in the central part of Rumeli which provided education to a large number of students. There were 15 students according to the waqfiyye (VGMA, 988:527) which corresponds to the data derived from the muhasebe defters from the 17th century. Furthermore, the documents show that their number increased in 1616-1618 to 18 *danişmends* (BOA, MAD.d. 4945: 115, 131,147).

Interesting data regarding their stipends can also be drawn from the *waqfiyye* and *muhasebe defters* from the 17th century. According to the endowment deed the medrese provided education to 15 students with a daily stipend of 2 dirhem presumably for candles and for other needs related to their education. They received the same sum at the end of the 17th century and their number remained unchanged (NBKM, OrO, 1/15110: 3b). Between 1616 and 1621 their number increased to 18 students with the same daily payment (2 akçes) (BOA, MAD.d. 4945: 115, 121, 147). Besides the stipend the students were provided daily food - twice *fodûla* (a kind of cake of fine, white flour), and once çorba (soup) (NBKM, OrO, 1/15110: 1b).

The rank of the *medrese* was assigned by the salary of its professors (*müderriş*³) and changed with its growth or reduction (Repp, 1986: 33-41; Uzunçarşılı, 1988: 11-12). The waqfname determined 50 dirhem daily for the teacher's salary (VGMA, 988: 544). But Baltacı points out that the *teachers* received 40 akçes as a daily payment until 1553-1554 when the salary of Harem Efendi grew to 50 akçes. The author explains that the salary of Harem Efendi upraised but he wanted to move up in a *medrese* from the category of *içil*⁴ (Repp, 1986: 38-39). When it did not happen, he preferred the post of *kadı* with a daily payment of 150 akçes (Baltacı, 1976:1 33, 420-421).

Table 1. Salaries of the müderrişes in the medrese 16th – 17th centuries

Period	Müderriş	Daily salary (akçe)
1560s	Harem Efendi	50
1617-1618	Mevlâna Mehmed Efendi	60
1618-1621	Mevlâna Alaeddin Efendi	50
1680	Mehmed Mevlâna Şemsi Allaeddin Efendi	60

The *muhasebe defter* from the second decade of the 17th century (BOA, MAD.d. 4945: 115,121,147) mentions two teachers – Mevlâna Mehmed Efendi (1616-1617) and Mevlâna Alaeddin Efendi (1618-

3 The five-graded hierarchy of Ottoman medreses was regulated first in the 1470s in a kanun of Mehmed II. The high-schools were divided in the following levels: *Yirmili* (müderriş' salary of 20-25 akçe); *Otuzlu* – (30-35 akçe); *Kırkılı* – (40 akçe); *Ellili* - (50 akçe) and *Altmış* (60 akçe). The category of *ellili* medreses was also devoted to *dahil* which defined the schools in the Ottoman capitals (Istanbul, Edirne and Bursa) and *haric* – those located in the provinces. Also the terms *Sahn* and *Medaris-i Seman* were used for that category which corresponded to the sultan's medreses. When a müderriş moved to the position of *kadı* his salary depended to the category of medrese in which he had been taught.

4 The term *içil* was used for the medreses in Istanbul, Edirne and Bursa and were considered for more prestigious in comparison with the high-schools of the category *kenar* – those located in the provinces.

1621). In the account book is recorded the total sums which formed the daily salary of the *müderri*s and the stipends of his students (*danişmends*⁵) – 92 akçes at the time of Mehmed Efendi and 82 akçes for Alaeddin Efendi and the students. The possible calculations of these sums allow us to assume that the first professor received 60 akçes while the salary of the second one dropped to 50 akçes. The same data is recorded for 1620-1621 – the teacher remained with 50 akçes (NBKM, OrO, D62:129). According to the information included to the Ottoman *Ruzname* from 1660 the professor received 40 akçes daily (Sabev, 2001: 128-132). But a protocol in a kadı register from 1680 testifies that Mehmed Mevlâna Şemsi Allaeddin Efendi received 60 akçes as a daily salary (NBKM, S85: 121-I).

The late 1690s were the most critical years for the complex and for the whole waqf. In Muharrem 1109 (July 1697) it stopped working at all because it was under such a bad condition that the *imaret* was useless. The kitchen prepared food only for the *waqf* staff and for the students in the *medrese* (NBKM, OrO, 15110: 3b-4a). At that time the complex did not serve according to the waqf-founder's will and it is obviously that the repairs had not been made yet.

Despite the existence of a defter at our disposal for the period between 1690s and 1710s, the daily payment of the teachers remains unclear. In the *account book* from 1693-1709 was mentioned that the *medrese* did not work in 1697-1698 and that the *waqf* spent 3,390 akçes for its repair works – for the rooms and the *dershane* (classroom) but there was no payment for the *müderri*s mentioned. Yet, there were 15 students who lived there and received daily stipend and food. It testifies that interruption of the educational service in the complex was temporarily. The accounting period 1698-1709 presents the total sum spent for all of the salaries and stipends without mentioning the items of these expenditures and we cannot calculate the salary of the teacher at that time (NBKM, OrO, 1/15110: 1b, 3b, 4b-5a).

Analyzing the data, we can assume that the *medrese* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa belonged to the category of *ellili haric* during the period of which we have data of our disposal – 1550s-1680s. Its position remained more or less stable with few exceptions when it moved down to the rank of *kırklı*. Yet, there are evidences that in some periods of time it belonged to the highest rank – *altmış*. Probably these changes depended to the rank of the *müderri*s, as well. We do not know what the situation between 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries⁶ was as the data of its rank remains unclear, but it is possible to assume that in the later period the salary of the professor was kept in accordance to the waqf donor's will (50 akçes) or as the sources from the 16th and 17th centuries testify – 40 akçes.

The published data about 24 *medreses* which existed in the Bulgarian lands shows that during the 16th and 17th centuries only the professors in the high schools of Karagöz Paşa and Şehabeddin Paşa in Plovdiv received 40 akçes as daily salary and the teacher in Ali Paşa's *medrese* in Tarnovo received 50 akçes per day. The schools which belonged to the lowest category *yirmili* (20-25 akçes) represented 75 % of the total number of the investigated *medreses* (Sabev, 2001: 133-135). Taking into consideration the possible comparison which can be made to this data the *medrese* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa can be defined as one of the highest-ranking in the Bulgarian lands during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Another data included in the *waqfiyye* and in the *muhasabe defter* from 1615-1618 permits us to compare the *medrese* in Sofia to the *dar'ül hadis* in Istanbul both created by Sofu Mehmed Paşa. The teach-

5 According to R. Repp the term *danişmend* is used for students in the Sahn medrese or in the higher ones. (Repp, 1986: 32-50).

6 From the 18th century on the medrese hierarchy from the category of ellili and altmışlı became more complicated. (Repp, 1986: 26; Uzunçarşılı, 1988: 36-38; Zilfi, 1983: 313-314).

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ers in the State capital received only 30 akçes (BOA, MAD.d. 4945:20, 115,121,147) which means that the *medrese* in Sofia was high-ranking in comparison to the school of the same donor located in Istanbul.

The Education

From the fact that the *medrese* under study provided high education to a large number of students, the important question of what kind of personnel was trained in it emerges.

According to the *waqfiyye*, the *müderris* should teach the students Islamic jurisprudence, including both legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and substantive law (*furū' al-fiqh*) which directs us to the assumption that the *medrese* prepared trained specialists of the Islamic law. Information of the education in the *medrese* can also be found in the aforementioned description of the Italian doctor Antonio Benetti from 1680. According to it the students were instructed of Islamic Law and Islamic religion (Viaggi a Costantinopoli di Gio, 1680: 180). Besides, bearing in mind that the educational system of the Sufism is based on the Quran and Sharia law, it is possible for the mystical order engaged with the *waqf* religious services to have impact on the education provided by the *medrese*, as well. During the first half of the 17th century almost all of the religious employees, including senior ones (the *hâtib* and the *imâm*), were registered as *halife*. Some of the *halifes* were recorded as *dede şeyh* (BOA, MAD.d. 4945: 121,147). The latter terms were used usually for the leaders of the dervish community (Parveva, 1998:173-174). We can suppose that the *halifes* were the people who graduated the order's educational system. But the sources do not give additional information which can be useful for us to define of which *târikat* they were followers.

The structure of the mystical brotherhood including all the religious functionaries – 4 leaders (*şeyh*), *hâtib* and *imâm*, 2 *müezzins* and 22 prayer *reciters* describes a consolidated and strong position of the Sufism in the second decade of the 17th century. It is possible to assume that the complex provided a gathering place of the *Sufi* adepts during the first half of the 17th century. We can also suppose a relationship with Islamic mysticism for the *waqf* founder Sofu Mehmed Paşa which is reasonable bearing in mind the considerable number of the representatives of the dervish community, his activities and policy and relationship with the famous Şeyh Bali Efendi. Probably, the complex was not only the place where the lodge of the *Sufi* seekers had a great influence, but also through the active role of the mystical descendants in the religious institutions and all the rituals *the mysticism* had its deep impact on the spiritual and religious practice among the Muslims in the center of Rumeli. Besides, the cult and educational institutions in the *waqf* complex were both a field of the *Sufi* activity and a key point of the Islam diffusion.

Rossitsa Gradeva (2011: 58) indicates that some of the *kadıs* who served in Sofia in the 17th century had strong ties with dervish brotherhoods which confirms the assumption that the mystical order had impact on the education provided by the *medrese*.

From the represented data it is possible to assume that the high school in Sofia was one of the so called *umumi medreses* (a high school of general education)⁷ where the Muslims were trained for the *kadı*, *mufti* or *müderris* profession. Approximately 90% of the *medreses* presented in the book of Cahid Bal-

7 The Ottoman medreses were of the following types: medreses for general education (*umumi*) and specialized – *dar ül-hadis* (for the study of hadises); *dar ül-kurra* (for the study of Koran, for training cult officers) and *dar üş-şifa* (for training medical officers) (Sabev, 2001: 48-51 and the studies cited there).

tacı in 16th and 17th centuries were defined as *umumi* (Baltacı, 1976). The *kadis* were the backbone of the judicial system and the mayor forces for the religious and cultural unity in the empire. Thus, their education and quality were of a great importance for providing sophisticated personnel in the state service.

The data available to the medrese testifies to its place in the policy of the Ottoman state, which laid down an imperial medrese curriculum to create new generations of ulema who would embody its official Hanafi affiliation (Şen, 2021: 201).

A list which represents part of the books preserved in the *medrese library* in 1696 is included in the defter from the end of the 17th century. Totally eight titles of manuscripts were recorded and among them four were related to the Islamic law (*fikh*) – *El-Hidāya, Vikāyetü'r-rivāye fî mesâ'ili'l-Hidāya, Şerhu'l-Wikāya and Ekmel (el-İnâye)*. Two books with *hadiths*, two volumes the *tafsir* of Kadı Beyzâvî and one Arabic Grammar are also mentioned (NBKM, OrO 1/15110: 1a). The *furu'* texts preserved in the medrese library were the basis of the Hanafi law. (Table 2) The list of the books supports our assumption of the education related to the Islamic law and religion which was provided in the *medrese*.

The size and the location of the medrese in the capital city of the Ottoman European province and the center of the administrative region kaza defines its role in the training of future religious officials and legal practitioners. It is a major place in the Balkans where we find the results of the Ottoman state's policy in producing Hanafi jurists who possessed a training in a standardized body of legal texts.

The Library

Like other early libraries from the 16th and early 17th century that in Sofu Mehmed Paşa's complex was not a separate building (Stainova, 1982: 27; Erünsal, 2008: 189, 193-195). There was a room designed for book storage on a corner in the second floor of the medrese. According to the waqfiyye the care for the books was among the responsibilities of the müderris but there was an option for a librarian to be appointed (VGMA, 988: 544). The muhasebe defters from the beginning of the 17th century when the müderris received the highest daily salary of 50 and 60 akçes show that there was no a librarian (BOA, MAD.d. 4549: 115, 131, 147). In 1821 one and the same person was also *müderris* and *librarian* - Mustafa bin Abdulrahman (NBKM, OR 344: 1a). Only at the time when the medrese had no teacher at its disposal, the time when the complex interrupted its services (1696-1697), a librarian (*hıfız-ı kitab*) with a daily payment of 1 akçe was recorded among the staff – Ahmed Efendi (NBKM, OrO 1/15110: 1b). Probably the lack of the müderris defined the need of someone who should take care for the manuscripts.

The *library* worked at the time when the medrese was open and although the waqf libraries were accessible to the public, the types of the books in the medrese under study supposes that it was used mainly by the students and the *ulema*.

We do not have a full list of the manuscripts at our disposal. In an annotation of a *kadı sicil* from 1550 a list of books and foodstuff in Sofu Mehmed Paşa's complex is mentioned. The original text of the *kadı sicil* (S 313) is not available nowadays and the list cannot be used for the present research (Galabov et al. 1960: 59/225).

Part of the books preserved in the *medrese library* in the end of the 17th century represents a list of those volumes which were affected by damages. Only nine volumes are recorded in the defter and they

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cannot reflect the whole collection of manuscripts. Yet, the eight titles which are recorded - *El- Hidāya*, *el-Elfiyye*, *Ekmel (el-înāye)*, *el Wikāya*, *Şerhu'l-Wikāya*, *Envârü't-tenzîl ve esrârü't-te'vîl (two volumes)*, *Mesâbîhu's-Sünne* and a volume which incorporated *fragments of Hadiths*, testify the importance and high value of these manuscripts. The first four titles were used in the Islamic Law disciplines *Fıkıh* and *Nahiv* by which the medrese prepared the future legal practitioners. The rest volumes were valuable *tafsirs* and *hadiths* also necessary for their education (Table 2).

Table 2. List of some books preserved in the library, 1697.⁸

Course/ discipline	Name in the defter	The whole title	Author
<i>Fıkıh</i>	Hidāye	El- Hidāye	Ebü'l-Hasen Burhânüddîn Alî b. Ebî Bekr b. Abdilcelîl el-Fergānî el-Mergînânî
<i>Nahiv</i>	Elfiyye	el-Elfiyye	İbn Mâlik / İbn Melek İbn Mâlik et-Tâî'nin
<i>Hadîs</i>	Muteferriqat fi el-hadis (fragments of hadis)	No data	No data
<i>Fıkıh</i>	Cild-i sani (second volume) Ekmel	Ekmel (el-înāye)	Ekmelüddîn Muhammed b. Mahmûd b. Ahmed el-Bâbertî er-Rûmî el-Mısırî
<i>Fıkıh</i>	Şerh Vikāye	Şerhu'l-Vikāye	Sadrüşşerîa es-Sânî Ubeydullah b. Mes'ûd b. Tâcişşerîa Ömer b. Sadrüşşerîa el-Evvel Ubeydillah b. Mahmûd el-Mahbûbî el-Buhârî
<i>Tefsir</i>	Tefsir Kadı	Envârü't-tenzîl ve esrârü't-te'vîl	Nâsirüddîn Ebû Saîd (Ebû Muhammed) Abdullah b. Ömer b. Muhammed el-Beyzâvî
<i>Tefsir</i>	defa (again) Tefsir Kadı	Envârü't-tenzîl ve esrârü't-te'vîl	Nâsirüddîn Ebû Saîd (Ebû Muhammed) Abdullah b. Ömer b. Muhammed el-Beyzâvî
<i>Fıkıh</i>	Vikāye	Vikāyetü'r-rivāye fî mesâ'ili'l-Hidāye	Burhânüşşerîa Mahmûd b. Sadrüşşerîa el-Evvel Ubeydullah el-Mahbûbî el-Buhârî
<i>Hadîs</i>	Mesâbîh	Mesâbîhu's-Sünne	Ebü Muhammed Muhyissünne el-Hüseyn b. Mes'ûd b. Muhammed el-Ferrâ' el-Begavî

Along with the development of the imperial educational hierarchy, according to the researchers, a series of imperial edicts and regulations, especially during the reign of Sultan Süleyman I, was used to standardize the education of the jurists who were affiliated with it and to consolidate the imperial jurisprudential canon. In the context of the increased demand for ulema both for the enlarged empire in the 16th century and for the Sunni orthodoxy against the Safavi-shî'î threat, Süleyman's edict from 1565 illustrates how the sultan regulated the imperial canon. (Zilfi, 1993: 112; Yıldız, 2017: 284-285; Ahmed, 2017: 283-304; Şen, 2021: 198-235)

8 The full books' titles and the authors' names are given according to their type of writing in TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi. Information about them can be found as follow: *TDVIA*, cild 17, 1998, 471-473; cild 11, 1995, 28-29; cild 4, 1991, 377-378; cild 35, 2008, 427-431; cild 11, 1995, 260-261; cild 43, 2013, 106-108; cild 29, 2004, 258-260.

The list of the manuscripts in the medrese library in Sofu Mehmed Paşa's complex can be defined as a part of the standardized body of legal texts canonized in 1565. The *Hidāya* is the basic manual of Hanafi rites, observances, and law. It should serve as the Muslim's principal guide through life. The *Hidāya* is al-Marghīnānī's shorter commentary on his *Bidāyat al-Mubtadi'*, itself a commentary on the foundational text for Hanafi fiqh scholarship. Through the medium of this text the readers are taught how to interpret the opinions of the Hanfi authorities (Yıldız, 2017: 286-291).

Burhān al-Sharī'a Maḥmūd's *Wiqāya al-riwāya min masā'il al-Hidāya* (The Trusted Narrative on Issues in the Guidance) is a digest of selections from the *Hidāya* designed to assist the beginning students in studying and understanding the authoritative text upon which it is based by presenting laws and rulings in a simple-to-consult format designed for easy memorization. The discussion of the sultan as appointed as God's representative and as the one responsible for appointing the qadi for the implementation of religious law is absent in the *Wiqāya*. The *Wiqāya* omits the theoretical aspects of Hanafi law, such as discussions of conflicting views (*ikhtilāf*) and the indication of right views, as found in the *Hidāya* (Yıldız, 2017: 286-291).

The *Wiqāya* had many commentaries. Among them is the '*Ināya*' (*Ināya fī sharḥ al-wiqāyat al-riwāya*) by 'Alā'eddīn el-Esved who was a scholar from Amasya. The most famous commentary of the *Wiqāya* is the *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya* by Tāj al-Sharī'a's grandson, 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahḥūbī, known as Sadr al-Sharī'a II, who also produced the *Niqāya*, an abridged version of the *Wiqāya*. 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahḥūbī's *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya* was usually studied together with the *Wiqāya*, which was reproduced together with its gloss with special attention to the chapters dealing with marriage, dower, and divorce (Yıldız, 2017: 290-291).

A list covering 69 volumes of manuscripts is included in the waqfiyye (VGMA, 988: 530). The endowment deed recorded all the sources which were donated for the maintenance of Sofu Mehmed Paşa's waqf without any demarcation of exactly which of them were defined to supply the medrese of the complex in Sofia and which – the dar ül-hadis and the mosques in Istanbul and Galata. The books were also listed without any explanation where they were preserved – in the medrese in Sofia or in that in Istanbul. It makes it difficult to reconstruct the catalogue of the medrese in the Rumeli center even on the basis of the waqfname.

There 18 titles of Arabic and Persian writings were mentioned, mainly *tafsirs* and *hadiths*. The number of the volumes of some selected works (between 4 and 13 volumes) supposed that they were used as textbooks but probably in the dar ül-hadis. Among them are '*The Large Commentary*' of *Fakhr al-Din al-Razi* (13 volumes), two commentaries of *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* (13 and 7 volumes). In the list of books also the *hadith* collections of *al-Sahīh al-Bukhārī* and *al-Baḡavi*, *tafsirs* of *Zamakshari* and *kadı Beyzavi* are included. As we can see the *tafsir of kadı Beyzavi* was among the manuscripts described in the Sofia medrese's library in 1696. It makes me prone to think that some of the essays listed in the waqfiyye were located in Sofia, as well. Especially the writings used in the discipline of Islamic law *Hidāya* (4 volumes) and *Mesharik* (13 volumes) (Andonova, 2020a: 156-160).

On the first page of a *tafsir* which is preserved nowadays in the Oriental Department of the Bulgarian National Library we can find an inscription for a donation from 17 Receb 1236/20th April 1821. The teacher and librarian in Sofu Mehmed Paşa's medrese Mustafa bin Abdulrahman dedicated the part of the *tafsir of Muhhamad ibn Baghdadadi* (NBKM, OR 344: 1a). It testifies that in 1821 the library of the medrese was still working.

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From a report of Arif Hikmet who made an inspection tour in the Danubian eyâlet in 1840 (Aydın, 1992:69-165), it is obvious that the most precious books in the mosque library of Seyfullâh Efendi in Sofia were those from Sofu Mehmed Paşa's library collection. Probably some of the manuscripts or even the whole collection of the *medrese* library in the complex of the Rumelian beylerbey were preserved there at that time. Bearing in mind the date of the donation made by Mustafa ibn Abdulrahman we can assume that they were probably moved sometime during 1830s.

Conclusion

The *külliye* of Sofu Mehmed Paşa comprised all those units through which the Islamic cultural model was imposed and spread. The main institutions provided the conditions for practicing religion, education and care for the inhabitants and guests of Sofia. The education in one of the high-ranking and largest *medreses* in the Bulgarian lands, especially during the period of the 16th – 17th, provided trained specialists for the needs of the main institutions in the Ottoman state. The preparation of the future practitioners in the legal, educational, and religious system confirms that the *medrese* constitutes part of the large-scale process of construction of the infrastructure of the state policy, as well as the institutions and personnel through which it was implemented. Besides, the medrese of Sofu Mehmed and the education which provided the future ulema with were an important element of the state attempts to regulate of law school but mainly it contributed to the political legitimization. As Madeline Zilfi notes the architecture was the material expression of Ottoman Islam and the ulema, medrese trained scholar jurists, were its living embodiment (Zilfi, 1988: 24).

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