

THE ROLE OF THE WAQF INSTITUTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALBANIAN CITY DURING THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

Waqf is an institution as heard as it is unknown to our society. Surprisingly, in addition to the general public, even serious scholars are mistaken when considering the waqf simply "as a religious institution." "In the Ottoman Empire, consequently in our country too, the collection of shops in the hands of the waqf is mainly explained by the fact of insecurity of private property and the great influence of this religious institution on the social classes of the country. Therefore, it became customary for private real estate to be transferred to the protection of the mosque, which used and administered it, leaving the owners partially entitled to usufruct and fully to inheritance. This is what Mr. Shkodra says when dealing with the issue of family waqfs. While, as it will be treated in this paper, the concept, legal basis, operation and scope of waqfs during the Ottoman period, was many times broader. Insufficient knowledge on the waqf, among other things, is related to the lack of studies on this topic. Starting from the period after the Second World War and coming to the present day, regarding the waqfs we have managed to identify only one article by Petraq Pepo on the waqf of Iljaz Bey Mirahori. The rest are mainly journalistic writings, an element that shows that studies on waqfs in Albania are still in their first steps.