Gender, Place and Culture
Vol. 15, No. 5, October 2008, 519–532

Wills, deeds, acts: women's civic gift-giving in Ottoman Istanbul

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The *waqf* (plural *awqaf*) is the Islamic pious endowment founded for charitable purposes. The Ottoman *waqf*, especially between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, became a gift-giving practice of solidarity in which women played an active role in founding and maintaining endowments as benefactors. These endowments served almost exclusively civic public services. While there has been considerable research on women and *waqf*, by moving beyond interpreting the ostensible motives that are always intertwined with women's role as 'family caretakers' or 'devout Muslims', we attempt to suggest that, interpreted as acts of piety, *awqaf*, and especially those that were founded as organized spaces known as *külliyes*, became institutions by which women were able to cultivate (in themselves and others) civic identities, and articulate civic solidarities as citizens of their cities. This image of women as civic gift-givers recasts them as active citizens of Ottoman cities, especially Istanbul.

Keywords: Ottoman women; civic gift-giving; citizenship; pious endowments (*waqf*); Istanbul

Introduction

Ottoman *awqaf* (singular *waqf*) were pious endowments founded for charitable purposes primarily between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. While Islamic law frames the basic parameters of *waqf*, Ottoman *waqf* acquired specific and systemic characteristics as a sustained civic gift-giving practice (Isin and Lefebvre 2005). Moreover, founding *awqaf* became the primary means by which cities were founded and through which what we would today call social and cultural services were provided to Ottoman 'citizens'. Since it served as the capital of the empire between 1453 and 1922, Istanbul's citizens benefited most from these *waqf* endowments. At first sight, using the phrase 'Ottoman citizen' may surprise the reader. Modern citizenship was ostensibly born of the nation-state in which certain rights and obligations were allocated to individuals under its authority. These rights typically include civil (free speech and movement, rule of law), political (voting, seeking electoral office) and social (welfare, unemployment insurance and health care) rights. The specific combination and depth of such rights vary from one state to another but a modern democratic state is expected to uphold a combination of these citizenship rights and obligations. By contrast, Ottoman subjects, while possessing entitlements, cannot be described as citizens in this modern sense. Citizenship as described above has a relatively recent history but it has a much longer history than the nation-state. Today, scholars trace its history, as is well known, to ancient Greek politics and Roman law. Both Greek and Roman polities practiced citizenship as a civic identity albeit with differences. But scholars have also pushed both historical and geographic boundaries of citizenship further. Some have studied

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ISSN 0966-369X print/ISSN 1360-0524 online

DOI: 10.1080/09663690802300860
http://www.informaworld.com

Mesopotamian 'citizenship' that existed centuries before Greek politics or Roman law (Springborg 1992). Similarly, scholars have questioned the 'Westernization' of citizenship and have begun studying citizenship in ancient China, ancient India and ancient Judaic, Christian and Islamic traditions. In all these studies, citizenship appears much less a state membership, let alone a nation-state membership, but an institution symbolizing generalized routines, practices and institutions that constituted humans as political beings, enabling them to deal with each other via *political* rather than violent means (Isin 2002a; Keyman and Içduygu 2005). *Thus, citizenship can be described as acts of negotiating differences via non-violent means rather than obliterating each other to annihilate such differences*. Citizenship cultivates human beings who understand themselves as beings with rights but also with the capacity to recognize the rights of others. Cultivating such a political identity requires practices, rituals and habits and that is why we define citizenship increasingly as those practices as well as a status that may result from them. This is not to suggest that citizenship as legal status is insignificant but to stress that citizenship practices make status possible. Without practices, citizenship is impossible; without status it remains ineffective.

The question that remains is whether 'citizenship' is an adequate concept with which to approach pious acts of establishing endowments that are ostensibly religious (Isin and Lefebvre 2005). Why insist on citizenship to describe such acts of piety? Here our approach resonates with Saba Mahmood's (2005) study on the women's mosque movement in contemporary Egypt. She investigates how the movement 'seeks to educate ordinary Muslims in those virtues, ethical capacities, and forms of reasoning that participants perceive to have become either unavailable or irrelevant to the lives of ordinary Muslims' (Mahmood 2005, 4). Although her concern is contemporary, her suggestion that such practices mean 'instructing Muslims not only in the proper performance of religious duties and acts of worship but, more importantly, in how to organize their daily conduct in accord with principles of Islamic piety and virtuous behaviour' resonates with our historical investigation of founding *awqaf* as acts of piety (Mahmood 2005, 4). Mahmood locates politics in everyday performances of ethical conduct and appropriately calls into question the autonomous and universal subject that 'resists' laws and norms as the ideal subject of politics. As Mahmood (2005, 9) argues, 'it is critical that we ask whether it is even possible to identify a universal category of acts – such as those of resistance – outside the ethical and political conditions within which such acts acquire their particular meaning'. For Mahmood (2005, 9), doing so makes it hard to recognize forms of being and action that are not necessarily addressed by the dominant narratives. We similarly argue that just because rights expressed in dominant narratives on citizenship as nation-state membership are absent in governing Ottoman subjects, it does not mean that a tacit but implied conception of rights was absent. We find rights and obligations expressed in acts of founding *waqf* (as acts of piety) that constituted both claimant (rights) *and* obligated subjects. We admit that to recognize these acts of piety as acts of citizenship is not a straightforward task and it raises vexing issues. Yet we insist on using citizenship because we know that it existed earlier in other cultures in its broader sense as we have outlined (Springborg 1987, 1992). Admittedly, acts of piety that we describe are not acts of resistance and claim-making, at least in the form we understand them. But the capacity to act 'is entailed not only in those acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one *inhabits* norms' (Mahmood 2005, 15). Thus, we agree with Mahmood that 'to examine the discursive and practical conditions within which women came to cultivate various forms of desire and capacities for ethical action is a radically different project than an orientalizing one that locates the desire for submission in an innate ahistorical and cultural essence' (Mahmood 2005, 15). This becomes a poignant issue for interpreting especially women founders of *awqaf*. While citizenship understood as franchise with property qualifications would have disqualified women (as all Western practices did until the suffragette movements in the twentieth century), Ottoman women enacted themselves as citizens by founding *awqaf* in the absence of legal disqualifications. Thus, rather than orientalizing Ottoman women by arguing for their lack of rights, we illustrate how they inhabited ostensibly religious norms to become political. We seek to describe acts of piety as acts of citizenship and we aim simultaneously to call into question what we understand by citizenship and its subjects as well as what we consider as political.

It is against this background that we wish to investigate the founding of *awqaf* by women in Ottoman cities. As mentioned above, the institution of *waqf* was a significant way through which cities were built and through which social and cultural services were provided to those whom we would entitle 'Ottoman citizens'. The varieties of *waqf* buildings and services are extensive. Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, thousands of madrasahs, schools, libraries, mosques, caravanserais, business centers (*hans*), bazaars, fountains, bridges, hospitals, soup kitchens or almshouses, lodges, tombs, baths and aqueducts were founded as *awqaf*. The study of Ottoman *awqaf* as represented in well-preserved *waqf* documents in Ottoman Archives in Istanbul provides only a glimpse into *them* as gift-giving practices *of* and *for* Ottoman citizens (Hoexter 2002). There are also numerous further records in Ottoman Sharia Courts that concern the founding of thousands of *awqaf* (Agmon 2004; Ze'evi 1998). In addition, there are thousands of deeds and associated records in The *Awqaf* Directorate in Ankara. Taken together, these records and the founding deeds (*vakfiye*) constitute the basis on which *waqf* studies operate. These *deeds* were simultaneously *wills* as well as *acts* in the legal sense of these terms. It is often said but it needs emphasizing here: these deeds expressed wills in perpetuity. A *waqf was* not meant to serve for a short duration but in perpetuity and cannot be dissolved by any earthly power. Moreover, it was not meant to serve only the interests of particular social groups in a given period of time but in perpetuity for everyone. This features as a significant and universal foundation in the association between cities and citizenship.

What we aim to provide in this article is an introduction to an Islamic legal institution of beneficence (Hennigan 2004), which was taken up by Ottoman law, codified and systematized to the extent that almost all social, cultural, religious and economic services were provided by this institution by the nineteenth century (Çizakça 2000; Gil 1998). This history is immensely complex but we focus on it from the perspective of space, gender and agency after orientalism (Isin 2002b, 2005). Neither the styles nor agents nor laws of founding a *waqf* nor its functioning were stable, coherent and static over the centuries. Nonetheless, by virtue of sheer numbers and repetition, there are indeed some broader patterns that emerge.

These broad patterns of Ottoman *waqf* are relatively well studied. An earlier generation of historians such as Ömer Lütfü Barkan (1942), Osman Ergin (1936, 1944), Fuad Köprülü (1938, 1942), Ali Himmet Berki (1946) and M. Hamdi Elmalılı (Öztürk 1995a) bequeathed an impressive literature to a new generation of historians such as Bahaeddin Yediyıldız (2003), Nazif Öztürk (1995b, 2003), Hasan Yüksel (1998), Murat Çizakça (1995, 2000), Amy Singer (2000, 2002), Miriam Hoexter (1998, 2002) and Ahmet Akgündüz (1996), who have deepened and broadened these studies. More recently, beneficence and philanthropy received renewed attention (Özbek 2005; Powers 1999; Powers and Peled 1989; Singer 2002). As a result, unlike many other studies on Islamic *waqf* published in English and French, studies on Ottoman *waqf* have a certain coherence (Hoexter 1998). Nonetheless, a connection between Ottoman *waqf* and citizenship, especially gendered citizenship, has never been made. Of course, this is not to imply that such a connection is not without its problems or that all *waqf* scholars would agree with it. *But it is remarkable that such an institution of beneficence should provide so many services in such a continuous way over so many centuries, to the extent that the rights it implies penetrate deeper than those we unquestioningly qualify as citizenship, that it has never been considered in the context of citizenship by either 'Western' or 'Eastern' scholarship* (Baer 1997; Gerber 1983;

Hoexter 2002; Peri 1992). Moreover, orientalist scholarship would have us believe that 'citizenship' existed only in the West. We are convinced that interpreting the acts and deeds of founding *awqaf* by women as citizenship practice will not only contribute to deconstructing a fundamental divide between an ostensible East and West but will also further deepen our understanding of citizenship as such.

As Hoexter (1998) has argued, an earlier generation of scholars of the Ottoman *waqf* has focused on its institutional aspects. More recently, new studies have drawn attention to the religious, social, economic and political aspects of the *waqf* that opened new ways of interpreting this significant Islamic and Ottoman institution. Hoexter (1998) points out three main stages in the development of studies of the Islamic endowment institution in the twentieth century. While the studies in the first stage concentrated on the legal aspects of the *waqf*, it was in the second stage that various scholars explored broader implications of the institution, while some scholars emphasized particular aspects of the institution itself, some used *waqf* documents to explore other issues. The topics covered in this stage ranged from how *waqf* was used by rulers as an instrument of political power, especially within the context of Ottoman expansion; the spread of Islam to control over provinces; and the importance of family (*ahli*) endowments to explore the inheritance and gender aspects of property.

Building on the studies in the first and second stages, it is the third stage that Hoexter (1998, 484) emphasizes as the beginning of new studies that 'incorporate the *waqf* in general ideological, sociological and cultural conceptions'. Within this context, in this article, we aim to provide a link between cities and citizenship. We argue that by founding several *külliyes* (*waqf* complexes that were originally known as *imarets*) in Istanbul, Ottoman women not only influenced and shaped the urban public spaces and forms, they also established a sense of belonging, public visibility and civic engagement *for women-citizens* of Istanbul. By examining various *külliyes* that were founded by Ottoman women in Istanbul, we aim to provide a link between cities and citizenship that ostensibly existed only in the history of occidental citizenship.

Külliyes as organized spaces

We have already addressed the gender and agency aspect of focusing on *awqaf* as acts of piety. As regards space, it is important to note that a *waqf* was rarely founded as an isolated edifice. Often it was part of a complex arrangement of several *awqaf* that together constituted a social and economic network. Moreover, it was also common to create this network as an organized space. This organized space was called 'külliye'. Ottoman benefactors used *awqaf* as a way to build cities by providing various services in such well-organized nuclei (*külliye* or *imaret*) through which a definitive shape was given to cities (Inalcik 1973; Singer 2002; van Leeuwen 1999). These *külliyes* played a significant role in everyday civic culture where citizens enjoined the formation of political and social identities. Most madrasahs, schools, libraries, mosques, caravanserais, commercial centers (*hans*), bazaars, fountains, bridges, hospitals, soup kitchens, almshouses, lodges, tombs, baths, and aqueducts were founded as part of such *külliyes*. These organized spaces are not only a testament to the structural and stylistic aspects of Ottoman architecture, but also to how generations of Ottoman citizens benefited from various social and physical services. *Awqaf* could also include other immovable property such as rural land that yielded income for urban property as well as movable property such as cash, books and other valuables. A *waqf* scholar, Nazif Öztürk (2003), estimates that throughout the Ottoman Empire more than 35,000 *awqaf* were founded, each including many such buildings. That means the vast majority of Ottoman architecture and cities were built as *awqaf*. According to Öztürk (1995b), these *awqaf*, by employing vast numbers of people and providing income, constituted about 16 per cent of the Ottoman economy in the seventeenth century, about 27 per cent in the eighteenth and about 16 per cent in the nineteenth century. Similarly, another *waqf* scholar, Murat Çizakça, estimates that by the end of the nineteenth century *awqaf* were providing more than 8 per cent of total employment in the Ottoman Empire (Çizakça 2000).

Another remarkable aspect is that founding a *waqf* was not a centralized or state-driven process (Inalcik et al. 1994). Founding a *waqf* involved endowing 'privately' held property for charitable use in perpetuity for functions that are set out in its founding deed or charter (*vakfiye*) and according to the conditions specified therein. The act of founding a *waqf* could take two forms: family endowment (*waqf dhurri*) or a charitable endowment (*waqf khayri*). Either way, the *waqf* would fulfill public functions. The *waqf* deed also set out the way in which the *waqf* property would be administered and maintained. The deed was registered and authenticated by a local judge (*kadı*) at the Ottoman Sharia court and did not require central approval. The typical principles underlying the *waqf* deed were autarchy (its management and maintenance would be funded by resources generated by the *waqf* itself and/or resources that flowed from other *awqaf*), perpetuity (once founded the *waqf* had existence that could not be terminated by authorities though by the nineteenth century this was tempered), autonomy (once founded the government and administration of a *waqf* was an internal affair) and beneficence (a *waqf* had to provide a public service). Amongst *waqf* founders were prominent sultans, sultanas, pashas, as well as much less prominent members of the Ottoman governing and merchant elite. More significantly, there were notable numbers of women and non-Muslim *waqf* founders, which needs to be investigated in terms of rights and duties (Fay 1997; Meriwether 1997).

It is thus vital to illustrate how *külliyes* as organized spaces played an important role in building Ottoman cities. Various scholars highlight the significance of Ottoman architectural and cultural traditions shaping *külliyes* (Goodwin 1987; Kuban 1994; Özer 1987; Yerasimos 2005). Istanbul, as the capital of the empire, benefited most from the founding of *külliyes*. No other city in the empire had as widespread *külliyes* as those in Istanbul (Kuban 1994). After Istanbul's conquest (1453), a main strategy of Mehmet II was to repopulate the city that had lost its social and economic resources especially during the siege (Unan 2003). The first group of educational and public buildings, the Eyüp Sultan (1458) and Fatih (1463–1970) *külliyes* were built for this specific purpose. In Ottoman Istanbul, earlier *külliyes* were used to repopulate the city and serve as a medium for initiation of new neighborhoods in various parts of the city (Kuban 1994, 166). *Külliyes* in Istanbul were built for several purposes, but in general it is possible to group them into two based on their provision of specific public services to the city (Kuban 1994). The first group of *külliyes* was designed and built to serve the entire city such as Fatih, Beyazıt, Haseki, Şehzade, Süleymaniye, Atik Sultan, Nuruosmaniye and Lâleli. They included several facilities such as mosque, school, fountain, library, hospital, soup kitchen, hostel, shops and public baths. The second group was built to serve the neighborhood to fulfill the specific needs of their surroundings like Murad Paşa, Atik Ali Paşa, Davud Paşa and Mihrimah Sultan. The second group included smaller scale külliyes and were generally composed of three units: mosque, tomb and school. These core services were vital in building new neighborhoods and revitalizing older ones (Özkoçak 1999).

Osman Nuri Ergin (1936, 1944), İbrahim Ateş (1982, 1987) and Bahaeddin Yediyıldız (2003), while recognizing the civic functions of the *waqf*, nonetheless interpreted them as religious complexes. But we glean from their work how *külliyes* functioned as civic institutions instigating the development of new neighborhoods, providing public health and security, and building an infrastructure of social interaction. Moreover, *külliyes* also cultivated a civic identity in the city. Yüksel (1998, 160) argues that almost 70% of all *awqaf* that were built in the Ottoman Empire were in cities. But it can be argued that even those that were not in cities were somehow related to *awqaf* in cities via an intricate political economy where income flowed back and forth. Until 1856, the Ottoman city did not have Western-style municipal administration where citizens would also be ratepayers or taxpayers for services rendered by the city. It was *awqaf* that provided various social and public services in the city. The *waqf* also played an important role in shaping urban form. Yüksel (1998, 160) emphasizes three major roles of *awqaf* in shaping the urban fabric of Ottoman cities: restoration and renovation of the previous *awqaf* (continuity of urban services in the city); enhancement of surroundings of the *awqaf* especially the pavements and the roads (accessibility of urban services), and; the provision of detailed information on the demographic and physical characteristics of the city found in the deeds (preservation of historical archives of the city).

There is much more that can be said about *külliyes* and their significance in building a civic culture. There is astonishingly little said about them, however, as *organized civic spaces*. Of significance, women were amongst the most prominent founders of *külliyes*. Ottoman women have been acknowledged in the literature as patrons of architecture with a specific emphasis on the linkage between status and wealth (Bates 1978, 1993). Yet we also know that while the act of founding a *waqf* was enacted by an individual, the beneficiaries of the endowment were always public (Hoexter 2002, 14). That women founded so many *awqaf* and *külliyes* may attest to the fact that as mothers and wives, women attended to other aspects of governing subjects than war, state and conquest. Thus, *külliyes* throw aspects of space, gender and agency into sharp relief.

Acts of piety and acts of citizenship

The role of women as benefactors of *awqaf* has been recognized in gender studies (Hoexter 1998, 481). Scholars interpreted women's acts of piety generally in terms of their social and political power in property or household relations. It has been recognized that women's property ownership not only enhanced their position in their households, but it was also one of the several ways in which women cultivated the cohesion, continuity and stability of the household (Fay 1997, 41).

Various studies emphasize the important role of women from different classes shaping property and household relationships. By focusing on different regions of the Ottoman Empire, these studies provide an important source in understanding *waqf* as a social, political and economic institution and how women were important actors in shaping the cities. Some examples of these studies are women in Jaffa and Haifa in the turn of twentieth century (Agmon 1998), women as creators and managers of endowments on late Ottoman Damascus (Deguilhem 2003), women in Damascene families around 1700 (Establet and Pascual 2002), women's role in the Mamluk household in eighteenth century (Fay 1997), women's social and economic position in Bursa in eighteenth century (Gerber 1980), women as patrons of religious architecture in Ayyubid Damascus (Humphrey 1994), women and their endowments in Ottoman Aleppo in nineteenth century (Meriwether 1997), and women in the seventeenth century Jerusalem (Ze'evi 1995).

Acts by women to found *awqaf* are also interpreted as a strategy to strengthen their patronage networks for stability, continuity and legacy for their families. Pierce (1993) notes that the governing class operated through complex personal bonds, family and household connections, and both men and women played significant roles in the formation of social networks during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Istanbul, such as Haseki Sultan's endowments in Jerusalem. Amy Singer's work on the Ottoman public kitchen (2005) also demonstrates the importance of endowments beyond religious purposes. She stresses the act of founding a *waqf* as 'inspired by spiritual, social, economic or political motives, possibly including self-interest and ambition' (Singer 2005, 481). Similarly, a recent study by Thys-Şenocak (2006) demonstrates how Ottoman imperial women undertook *waqf* building as public projects.

Earlier discussions in the literature generally focused on motives for founding *awqaf*. It was often argued that women were motivated to found *awqaf* to safeguard their property and its income from interference and control by husbands or husbands' families. As Baer (1983) argues, by endowing their property women were able not only to safeguard it from confiscation and appropriation but also benefit from the *waqf* during their lifetime to maintain their right to manage the property. Generally, endowing property is attributed to the elite and rich women, but recent studies show that women from all classes acted to endow under various political, social, economic and cultural conditions. For example, in Jaffa and Haifa, women of middle-class families who had managed to take advantage of the economic prosperity of the late nineteenth century founded a considerable number of *awqaf* that contributed to the upward mobility and prestige of their families (Agmon 1998). Be that as it may, the focus has been on the ostensible motives for founding *awqaf*.

But if we move beyond immediate motives (whether the founders themselves could articulate them or not), we must observe that women led civic and public lives. Women had civic, economic and social existence. They were not merely confined to their houses as passive subjects; they moved around the city and visited friends, neighbors, relatives and, by founding *awqaf*, they constituted themselves as gift-giving, civic subjects. As Gerber (1980, 233) argues, women were intensely involved in the civic and social life of the city and occupied important positions in the daily life of the seventeenth-century Bursa. They had a very good understanding of the city, its problems as well as its needs. We would argue that as citizens of cities, women acted to found *awqaf* for various reasons that cannot be reduced to the motives that may or may not have been explicitly expressed. We would like to stress the importance of women's acts of endowment as an expression of civic responsibility for the city and emphasize how these acts played a role in building, shaping and maintaining the city. We would like to emphasize how women's acts of piety can be interpreted as their care for the city and its citizens, especially for those who were socially and politically marginalized. These acts cared for strangers as well as familial members. It would be wrong to assume that their care was limited to their own social networks as patronage. As responsible and caring citizens, they looked after the excluded and marginal social groups in the city including slaves, the poor, providing dowry for poor girls, widows, orphans as well as care for animals (especially birds, dogs, cats, and storks).

If we recognize that one of the important functions of the Ottoman *waqf* was to create and cultivate civic identity, we must assume that women had a grounded understanding of that function. By endowing their property, women as well as men participated in the formation of public spaces, thus enacting a strong sense of belonging to the city (Hoexter 2002, 121). To found a *waqf* meant identifying a purpose, organizing its management and administration, arranging legal and fiscal aspects with the local judge (*kadı*), and drawing up the deed (*vakfiye*) and its clauses that represented its purpose, management and administration. All these required considerable social and cultural skills and an ability to negotiate with all those concerned. It also required a hands-on involvement with its building, administration and management. By founding *awqaf*, women helped define the characteristics of their administrators who were essentially their guardians. These characteristics often emphasized certain virtues including being devout, familiar with Sharia, responsible, serious-minded, clean, honest, skillful and resourceful. Taken together, these can be said to constitute civic virtues and women played a significant role in creating and cultivating them.

Külliyes as women's organized spaces

More recent studies focusing on everyday life highlight the importance of pious foundations shaping the vernacular form and culture in the Ottoman cities (Faroqhi 2000; Humphrey 1994). Ottoman Istanbul, being the capital of the Empire between 1453 and 1922, has a particular significance in understanding urban culture and everyday life and a close examination of its *awqaf* opens new venues to explore the relationship between cities and citizenship. We suggest that, as citizens actively engaged in social and economic affairs of the city, women in Ottoman Istanbul articulated and expressed their civic identities through founding various *awqaf*. By the mid-sixteenth century in Istanbul, 37% of all officially recorded founders of *awqaf* were female (Faroqhi 2000, 118). A study conducted in the 1930s indicates that 128 of 491 fountains built in Ottoman Istanbul were endowed by women belonging to various social classes (Can 1999, 28). Many of these *awqaf* were founded as parts of *külliyes*. A close examination of *külliyes* reveals the importance of these organized spaces in shaping the everyday urban life in Istanbul as well as how women were caring citizens in observing the needs and the needy of their cities. By caring for fellow and future citizens women not only acted to build cities but they also invested in those who were excluded and marginalized. Their acts of piety constituted them as benefactors as well as constituting beneficiaries as claimants.

The significant study by Baer (1983) on women and *waqf* illustrates how women became acting subjects. Based on a random sample of about 500 *waqf* documents published by Barkan and Ayverdi (1970), Baer focuses on the economic position of women as property holders and challenges the ostensibly subservient role of Ottoman women. Baer illustrates that *awqaf* founded by women in sixteenth-century Istanbul had the following characteristics: they were small; they included urban properties; the founders themselves would administer them in the first place and later men would be involved. He notes that women founders allocated relatively small funds for maintenance and administration of the *awqaf* that they founded. Yet he illustrates that in later periods women endowed more resources for public purposes than men. While Baer's contribution has been significant, his sole focus on economic aspects of *waqf* endowments neglects social and cultural aspects. How acts of piety functioned as gift-giving acts of solidarity and civic responsibility remained unexplored. Thys-Şenocak (1998, 2006) argues that imperial women establishing *awqaf* in Istanbul became an important priority in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries unlike in earlier periods when the emphasis was building in the provinces.

In Istanbul there were several prominent *külliyes* founded in women's names. There were two kinds: those that were founded by sons or husbands of women and those that were endowed by women themselves. For example, Mahmud II built Nakşidil Sultan *külliye* in Fatih for his mother Nakşidil Sultan in 1818. Similarly, Ahmed III built Yeni Valide *külliye* in Üsküdar for his mother Emetullah Gülnüş Valide Sultan between 1708 and 1710. Yeni Valide *külliye* played a very significant role in the reform movement of Ahmed III when he aimed to improve the living conditions of citizens as well as the aesthetics of the city. Without reducing the importance of those *külliyes* that were founded *for* women, we nonetheless focus on those that were founded *by* women.

There are several important *külliyes* founded by women in Istanbul. Haseki Hürrem *külliye* was built in multiple phases between 1538 and 1550 by the famous imperial architect Sinan. It had several units including mosque, school, soup kitchen, and a hospital for women. In Aksaray neighborhood, she also commissioned a public bath for both men and women known as 'double bathhouse' near Topkapı Palace. The baths had matching premises for both men and women that were built back to back. The baths shaped the development of a dense neighborhood in the area as it provided one of the fundamental services in the city. Hürrem had also commissioned several other foundations outside of Istanbul, including at Jerusalem, Ankara, Edirne and Mecca. We also know that Hürrem endowed a significant amount of money for poor girls, pilgrims and slaves. What is significant about Hürrem and her foundations is that unlike her predecessors, whose works were confined mainly to Anatolian provincial capitals, she endowed various foundations in other significant cities of the empire (Pierce 2000: 58). Pierce (2000) argues that it is with Hürrem's *awqaf* that Istanbul became a significant space for civic gift-giving acts. Like Pierce (2000, 60), we would like to argue that Hürrem's endowments can be interpreted as 'an act of concern for women'.

Following her mother, Mihrimah Sultan also commissioned two *külliyes* in Istanbul. The first one was completed in 1548 and is located in Üsküdar neighborhood, a significant location where the Empire's Asian and European territories intersect. The second one is located in Edirnekapı neighborhood. The acts of this mother and daughter recognize the significance of the provision of physical and cultural services to the citizens so that their foundations not only present important examples of Ottoman architecture, but also how the *waqf* served as a technology of government through which a civic identity was cultivated (Hoexter 2002).

Nurbanu, mother of Murat III, founded in 1583 Atik Valide *külliye*, also in Istanbul's Üsküdar neighborhood (Kuran 1984). As we have mentioned above, it responded to the needs of the city and served the interests of the whole city, like Fatih and Beyazid *külliyes*. Its location was strategically chosen and was aimed to encourage new settlements and developments in and around Üsküdar. After its construction, the area became a crucial residential and commercial center in Istanbul. Various facilities of the *külliye* provided services for the city including a school and a public kitchen for the poor. As late as 1856 the *külliye* was used as a public hospital when there was a cholera outbreak in the city. *Waqf* facilities and services provided through *külliyes*, such as Atik Valide, supported citizens not only economically, but also through social interactions in public baths, mosque and libraries. *Külliyes* cultivated civic identities and identifications (Kuran 1996). As a responsible citizen, Atik Valide also preserved the heritage of the city by rebuilding the Kavsara Mustafa Paşa Mosque.

We can interpret these acts of piety by Ottoman women as the presence of a strong sense of the city and their civic duties. For example, if we examine the endowments of Bezmi Alem Valide Sultan (the mother of Sultan Abdülmecit), it is possible to see how she imagines herself in solidarity with the city and its citizens. Being fortunate enough to found and endow various facilities around Istanbul, she built several fountains in Istanbul, such as in Kasımpaşa (1840), Topkapı (1843), and Silivri (1841). Like public baths, building fountains meant providing a vital service for the neighborhood (Can 1999). Such *waqf* services and facilities as fountains and public baths were important factors that determined the population growth of the neighborhood and its incorporation into the city (Faroqhi 2000). By constructing several facilities, Bezmi Alem Valide Sultan played a substantive role in the urban growth of various neighborhoods of Istanbul. She endowed Hospital Guraba (1845) where citizens of Istanbul received free health services. She also built Valide School (1850) and Sultan Abdülmecit registered his son and his daughter in this school as an example for others in the city. The school is still in operation as Cağaloğlu Anadolu High School. By providing services for the poor and orphans, Bezmi Alem Valide Sultan became a respected woman in Istanbul, recognized for her concern and her contributions to the daily life of citizens. Like Atik Valide Sultan, she cared for historical preservation in the city and rebuilt Karamustafa Paşa Mosque. She also commissioned the famous Galata Bridge in Eminönü.

While Üsküdar was shaped by various endowments from Valide Atik Sultan, it was Mihrişah Valide Sultan *külliye* that transformed Eyüp and its surroundings. Eyüp neighborhood has always played an important role in shaping everyday life in Istanbul and its surroundings. Mihrişah Valide Sultan recognized the religious and cultural significance of the neighborhood, and she founded her *külliye* to meet the increased demand around the area. With its public kitchen, library and mosque, Mihrişah Valide Sultan *külliye* responded to the needs of this rapidly growing neighborhood. The extensive *külliye* services also included a public library where 540 books were registered. The books in the library were donated by citizens, and currently the books are kept in Süleymaniye library (Gültekin 1994). Another significant part of Mihrişah *külliye* is its public kitchen. Even today it provides for more than 1500 citizens in Istanbul. Despite its location in Eyüp, the kitchen daily serves other neighborhoods including Kağıthane, Piyale Paşa, Üsküdar and Maltepe. We would like to stress the continuity of these foundations and their significance in the creation of civic spaces and services in Istanbul. It is remarkable to see how a significant social service like public kitchens systematically operated for centuries to pursue social solidarity and civic culture in the city.

As we have argued above, Mihrişah *külliye* has played a significant role in Eyüp since its foundation. The same can be said about Eminönü neighborhood and Yeni Cami *külliye*. It was with the organization of this space that Eminönü became an important cultural, economic and social focus in Istanbul. The Egyptian Bazaar, which was built as a part of this space, is one of the most vibrant places even in contemporary Istanbul. This *külliye* took enormous time and energy to complete: while Safiye Sultan established it in 1597, it was not until 1663 that it was completed under Hatice Sultan, which can be interpreted as an intergenerational solidarity and commitment amongst women founders (Bates 1993; Thys-Şenocak 1998).

While it can be argued that the examples we have given so far represent 'elite' women, we also observe that women from other social classes endowed *awqaf* in Istanbul. According to the 1587 endowment of Daughter of Kemal, an ordinary Ottoman subject, Zeyni Hatun, the students of Mustafa Çelebi School, located in Üsküdar, would get new clothing on every religious holiday. In addition to the students, 1000 *akçe*, would be given to the poor and the needy, especially to poor and widowed women (Ayanoğlu 1963). Similarly, an ordinary Ottoman subject, Zeynep Hatun, built a mosque and a school in Eyüp with modest resources. Sitti Hatun's school was the first school built in Istanbul by an Ottoman woman. Gülfam Hatun endowed a school in Üsküdar. In 1768, Okumuş Hatice Kadın endowed a school in Fener. One of the most important endowments in Istanbul was Yedi Sofralı Sakine Hatun. The endowment included a mosque and a fountain. The mosque provided food for the poor seven times every day. It lasted almost four centuries until the republican government appropriated its properties in 1965. We have no evidence that these women belonged to wealthy and powerful circles. Their titles (*hatun*, *hanım*, daughter) indicate that while obviously not poor, they were of ordinary social status.

Acts of piety also played an important role in public works including paving of roads, building of bridges and organization of water supply. In Istanbul, women built aqueducts. In 1732 Saliha Valide Sultan initiated the construction of an aqueduct in Bahçeköy on the European side of the Bosphorus. In 1788, Mihrişah financed the building of an aqueduct to serve Tophane, Galata and Beyoğlu.

Hoexter (1998), Pierce (2000) and Singer (2005) have demonstrated the significance of *awqaf* founded by women in Ottoman cities. Examining various *külliye* facilities and services, it is possible to argue that women belonging to different social classes in the Ottoman Empire became benefactors and endowed facilities and services that were crucial in building civic solidarities and citizenship. We have attempted to argue in this article that the women founders of *awqaf* have contributed to the formation of civic identity understood as entitlement and engagement. This enables us to further our argument on the relationship between acts of piety and acts of citizenship. The literature on women's *awqaf* especially emphasizes their architectural patronage linking it to status, wealth and in most cases religion, but as we have demonstrated women's acts of piety have been cultivating a civic culture for centuries that must be understood beyond individual, private or autonomous wills. Ottoman women developed a very good understanding of their civic responsibilities and care for their cities and fellow as well as future citizens are represented in the deeds they left and acts they performed.

Conclusion

The dominant image of Ottoman women as 'oriental subjects' suggests that they were passive. The prevailing image of Ottoman women portrays them as veiled, out of sight and without public skills or capacities (Yeğenoğlu 1998). The dominant image of the Ottoman city as a species of the 'oriental city' suggests that it lacked civic identity and collective institutions (Weber 1978, 1223–24, 1233). The *waqf* as a gift-giving practice of solidarity and the active role women played in founding and maintaining *waqf* endowments as benefactors belie both images. While there has been considerable research published on women and *waqf*, by moving beyond investigating or interpreting the ostensible motives that are always intertwined with women's role as 'family caretakers', we have attempted to argue that, interpreted as acts of piety, *awqaf*, and especially those that were founded as *külliyes*, became institutions by which women were able to cultivate (in themselves and others) civic identities, and articulate solidarities as citizens of and for their cities. The deeds that they enacted, understood both as their acts of piety and their legal expression (*vakfiye*), expressed a strong will to become and make responsible subjects. *We have interpreted these deeds and acts as articulations of the will to constitute themselves as citizens*. But this does not mean that women were citizens in the way in which modern citizenship is understood; nor were they civic in the way in which the modern city is constituted. That would be reverse orientalism in the sense that we would recognize certain practices as citizenship only if they conformed to already instituted Western norms. Rather, to suggest that Ottoman women were able to act as citizens means that we explored possibilities of interpreting their acts of piety as *different* acts of citizenship and thus reconsidering whether this *difference* can illuminate what modern citizenship and civic identities might mean in contemporary societies.

Acknowledgements

An earlier version of this article was presented at the Great Lakes Ottomanist Workshop, University of Toronto (17–19 March 2006). We would like to thank Virginia Aksan and Victor Ostapchuk for inviting us to the workshop as well as workshop participants who asked penetrating and critical questions that enabled us to improve the article significantly. We are also grateful to Selma Akyazıcı Özkoçak for providing a close reading of a version revised after the workshop and for her critical comments from which we have benefited immensely. The comments by three anonymous referees and the editor, Robyn Longhurst, were crucial in sharpening our argument and we are grateful for their suggestions.

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATION

Testamentos, títulos, leyes: la donación cívica de las mujeres en el Estambul otomano

El *waqf* (*awqaf* en plural) es el fondo piadoso islámico creado para propósitos caritativos. El *waqf* otomano, especialmente entre los siglos quince y dieciocho, se volvió una práctica de donación solidaria en la que las mujeres jugaban un activo rol como benefactoras en la fundación y el mantenimiento de los fondos de donación. Estos fondos servían casi exclusivamente a servicios públicos cívicos. Mientras se ha realizado una considerable investigación sobre mujeres y *waqf*, avanzando más allá de la interpretación de los motivos ostensibles que están siempre entrelazados con el rol de las mujeres como "cuidadoras de la familia" o "musulmanas devotas", intentamos sugerir que, interpretados como actos de piedad, los *awqaf*, y especialmente aquellos que son fundados como espacios organizados llamados *külliyes*, se tornaron instituciones mediante las cuales las mujeres fueron capaces de cultivar (en ellas mismas y en otros) identidades cívicas, y articular solidaridades cívicas como ciudadanas de sus ciudades. Esta imagen de las mujeres como donantes cívicas las reformula como ciudadanas activas en las ciudades otomanas, y en especial en Estambul.

Palabras claves: mujeres otomanas; donación cívica; ciudadanía; donaciones piadosas (*waqf*); Estambul