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Gazi Isa-beg, the founder of Sarajevo

Isa-beg's *vakufnama* (deed of endowment), the oldest signed document of the Ottoman rule about Sarajevo was verified in front of the Sarajevo *Sheriah* (Sher'ī`at) court, as stated, in the month džumade-l-ulu , *Hijri* 866. (1462. a.c.) *vakufnama* was, according to the rules and customs at the time, written in front of the *kadija* (judge), and its origin was confirmed with signatures of 18 witnesses.

Isa-beg was represented by duke Hoš Kadem, mentioned in one document written in June 1461 by people from Dubrovnik as "the duke of Aschadam de Verhbossania". *Hodza* Sinanudin Karamani was appointed as the first *mutevelija* (master) of Tekija. The text of Isa-beg's *vakufnama* was written in Arabic language. The original of this document is lost, but 4 verified hand copies still exist. One hand copy exists in *sidzil* of Sarajevo *Kadija* Seid Mustafa Salim *efendija* (effendi) from *Hijri* 1254 or 1838a.c. This copy was verified by 9 Sarajevo judges (*kadija*). *Vakufnama* does not mention *mesdzid* (a kind of mosque), built by Isa-beg, which would be the first building after the inn. The first *mesdzid* had a wooden minaret.

The first building included in *vakufnama*, was made on the right bank of Miljacka, next to today's dam on Bentbasha. That was Isa-beg's *zavija* (zawijah), and one of the oldest Sarajevo *mahala* (neighbourhood) was named it. Most likely this Isa-beg's endowment was built after 1457, although according to some legends of Bosnian *Sufies* it existed during the second half of 14th century. There are some theories about presence of Islam and Muslims on this territory even before it was conquered by Ottoman Impery. In the early Ottoman period, *zavija* had a complex role and purpose.

The complex of buildings includes *tekija* (where dervishes lived), *musfirhana* (inn) and imaret (kitchen for the poor). The humanitarian and spiritual factions were closely integrated.

Some historians translate Arabic expression *zawiyya*, *zavija* (zawijah) as "the tekija stile inn". The original, basic meaning of the word *zavija* was "a corner". One corner of a building was designated place for a cell, a room for dervish. Later a little *mesdzid* was arranged next to the cell. Because of the piety of its tenants, some of the *zavijas* would become legendary places with time. The believers would visit *kabur* (grave) of the "The God's people" in *zavija*, paying their respect or seeking for answers to their questions or problems, or a cure for their diseases.

It is understandable why Isa-beg *zavija* was built on the entry point of the old village Brodac, near the medieval settlement known as the Old Town or Market Place. Before building caravan-saraj, *zavija* served as a main shelter for travellers.

The historian Hazim Sabanovic, according to his translation of the *vakufnama* from 1462, interpreted Isa-beg *zavija* primarily as *tekija*. The second prominent historian, Hamdija Kresevljakovic is on the contrary excluding that possibility. He thinks that Isa-beg's *vakuf* (endowment), in the village of Broadac, is a *musafirhana*.

The Sheih, who is mentioned in the deed of endowment, he considers the head of *imaret* and the whole *zavija* (sejhu-l-imaret). Although this is not explicitly stated in Isa beg's *vakufnama*, Kresevljakovic is evoking the Gazi Husrev beg's *vakufnama* from 1531 where the manager of *imaret* is explicitly stated. In that document, dated 47 years after the

construction of Isa-beg's *zavija*, this building and institution is called *musafirhana* (inn), not *tekija* (residence for dervishes).

Herzegovina sandzak-beg Sinan-beg, endowed in Cajnice one *musafirhana* in the year 1582, which was also referred to as *zavija*. From clear statements of his deed of endowment (*vakufnama*) verified by shariat (Sher'iat) court in the middle of dzumade-l-ula *Hijri calendar* 990, ie. 7th May 1582, it can be concluded that it is not a *tekija* but *musafirhana* and surrounding buildings, as is the case with Isa-Beg's *zavija*.

Isa beg's *zavija* was comprised from three buildings, one stable and a fenced court. *Zavija* employed the following personnel;

- Shejh (most likely the manager of *imaret*, not shejh of *tekija*)
- The cook, who received a salary of two dirham's and half dirham for the bread:
- The door keeper, who opened and closed the doors of *musafirhana* and took care of inventory;
- mutemed* –storage keeper, who was paid one dirham per day, half dirham for bread and free food;
- with the same salary there was one more servant, who prepared the weed for daily needs of *imaret* (kitchen).

The Vakuf, Isa-beg, decided that his *zavija*, *musafirhana* is dedicated to the poor Muslims and that the food left over from the day is distributed to the poor children in the city.

Important function of the *vakuf* was also to serve as a home and place for spiritual development of the dervishes.

According to the *vakufnama*, *zavija* serves as "tekija, shelter for the poor Muslims, pupils who are seeking knowledge, and sejjids (the descendants of Mohamed alejhi selame, by so called thin blood, warriors, and travellers)"

The main building of the estate of Isa-beg's *zavija* became *mevlevi tekija* later.

During many centuries the *zavija* was one of the most important points of Ottoman Sarajevo. Except for the activities of dervish order and humanitarian activities, the huge garden was used for *esnafs*, craft-guild events during the graduation of the pupils to the next level towards the mastery.

The complex was damaged many times during floods, fires, wars and other social unrests. It was completely reconstructed on 1890. The final destruction of *zavija* started 1941 after establishment of NDH (Croat ruled facist state), and final decision on its demolition was brought by the city administration of Sarajevo on year 1950, and on 1957 the decision was executed.

After the last war, the reconstruction of Isa-beg *zavija* was initiated, and in that regards on 1st of June 1997 excavations of the remains have started at the location of *zavija*.

Due to the numerous rough construction activities on this locality during many decades: demolition of the *tekija* and other objects in its complex, laying of the terrain, building of a road and more recent buildings and so on, the predictions for the complete reconstruction are grave.

Current excavations revealed the foundations of several buildings.