Coping with Life's Challenges in Ottoman Sarajevo: Freed Slaves and Agency in an Early Modern Borderland Society

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Osmanlı Saraybosna'sında Hayatın Zorluklarıyla Başa Çıkmak: Erken Modern Dönem Sınır Toplumunda Azat Edilmiş Köleler ve Eylemlilik

Öz ■ Bu makale, erken modern Osmanlı dönemi Saraybosna'sında azad edilmiş kölelerin sosyal entegrasyonunu ve eylemliliğini inceleyerek Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun toplumsal tarihindeki boşlukları doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Son zamanlardaki çalışmalar, kolektif biyografi yaklaşımını kullanarak Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda özgürleştirilmiş kölelerin eylemliliğini değerlendirmede önemli ilerlemeler kaydetmiştir. Ancak, birkaç istisna dışında, çoğunlukla Osmanlı dünyasının iç kısımlarıyla ilgili arşiv materyallerine, özellikle İstanbul Bölgesi'nin kadı sicillerine dikkat edilmiştir. Yazar, Osmanlı sınır bölgelerinin toplumsal tarihini ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki azad edilmiş kölelerin prosopografisini yazmaya bir adım daha yaklaşmak istiyorsak, çeşitli bölgelerden arşiv kaynaklarının dikkate alınması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Yukarıda belirtilen hedeflere ulaşmak için, bu makale Saraybosna'daki Şeriat mahkemesi kayıtlarında ve ayrıca tapu tahrir defterlerinde ve vakıf belgelerinde bulunan azad edilmiş kölelerle ilgili bilgileri analiz etmeye odaklanmaktadır. Yazar, bu tür kaynakları kullanarak, özgürleştirilmiş erkekler ve özgürleştirilmiş kadınlarla ilgili örneklerde toplumsal yapı ve eylem arasındaki etkileşimini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Bosna, Kölelik, Azat Etme, Azatlılar, Sınır Toplumu, Sosyal Tarihi.

Ottoman archives contain numerous documents which provide us with unambiguous evidence that the manumission of enslaved people was a widespread practice in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire. Recent scholarship, building on the achievements of previous historians who dealt with the topic of slavery in the Ottoman context, has brought renewed attention to the modes of manumission,

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its legal background, terminology, and freedom suits as well as to the social integration of freedmen into the Ottoman society.[1] It has been established that the relationship between the manumitted slaves and their former masters did not end with the legal act of emancipation but was rather replaced by another form of social, economic, and even emotional dependency that has often been described as patronage, or as a bond of personal loyalty. Furthermore, several authors argued that the freedom the slaves gained by the act of manumission was not the same freedom possessed by other freeborn. Together with this, particularly refreshing was the methodological choice to use the collective biography approach to reach new conclusions about the freed slaves as a group based on data contained in the Sharia court records. Such documents have rightfully been recognized and praised as key primary sources for understanding the lives of freedmen, but, on the other hand, it has also been asserted that court record entries only provide us with fragments for understanding slave biographies, which ultimately may explain why the lives of individual slaves can usually not be traced over the extended period.[2]

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1 Veruschka Wagner, "Modes of Manumission: What Terms Used for Emancipation Tell Us about Dependencies in Ottoman Society", *Slavery and Other Forms of Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies. Semantics and Lexical Fields*, eds. Jeannine Bischoff and Stephan Conermann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), pp. 205-24; Nur Sobers-Khan, *Slaves Without Shackles. Forced Labour and Manumission in the Galata Court Registers, 1560–1572* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 2014); Ehud R. Toledano, "The Concept of Slavery in Ottoman and Other Muslim Societies. Dichotomy or Continuum", *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa. A Comparative Study*, eds. Toru Miura and John Edward Philips (London: Kegan Paul International, 2000), pp. 159-75; Ehud R. Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Ehud R. Toledano, *As if Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East* (New Heaven: Yale University, 2007); Y. Hakan Erdem, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800–1909* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); Suraiyya Faroqhi. "Manumission in 17th-Century Suburban Istanbul", *Mediterranean Slavery Revisited (500–1800)/Neue Perspektiven auf mediterrane Sklaverei (500–1800)*, eds. Stefan Hanß and Juliane Schiel (Zürich: Chronos, 2014), pp. 381-402; Joshua M. White, "Slavery, Freedom Suits, and Legal Praxis in the Ottoman Empire, ca. 1590–1710", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 65/3 (2023), pp. 526-56.

2 For the application of the collective biography approach, and the discussion on dependency debate, see Veruschka Wagner, "'Free as other Freeborn' or Just Another Form of Dependency? Questioning the Situation of Manumitted Slaves in Early Modern Istanbul", *BCSS Working Paper 22/06* (Bonn: Bonn Centre for Dependency and Slavery Studies, University of Bonn, 2022), pp. 1-14.

Although the analysis of the historiographic literature has shown that the last twenty years have brought us new insights into the issue of slave manumission, there are still shortcomings and questions that need to be addressed if we are to gain a deeper insight into the former slave lives after their liberation from slavery.

Firstly, the documentary basis for recent analyses has mostly been found in the Sharia court records produced in the areas located in what is today the Istanbul Region,[3] while previous authors included the materials from several other Sharia courts from areas which are today, also, a part of the Republic of Turkey.[4] Also, research has been conducted on the slavery and freedmen in the Crimean Khanate, Egypt and Crete.[5] Having in mind the size of the Ottoman Empire and the number of Sharia courts that existed on that vast territory, it becomes obvious that any further advance in this field should include records from various Sharia courts, including the borderland regions of the Empire towards the Habsburg Monarchy and the Venetian Republic. Particularly, it would be important to include the data from unpublished sources, which are almost unknown to the broader public. By doing so, the academic community would hopefully have a better opportunity to develop a comparative approach to the issue of manumission as well as to the diversity of ways the freedmen interacted with their social environment. In that regard, it would be particularly important to combine

3 For example, the records on manumission from the Sharia court protocols from the Istanbul Region were explored in the previously mentioned papers written by Wagner, Faroqhi, Sobers-Khan. For the analysis of the probate records of imperial-court affiliated slaves and the discussion on *velā* relationship, see Betül İpşirli Argıt, "Freed Imperial Court-Affiliated Slaves and their Former Masters in the Early Modern Ottoman World: The Role of the *Velâ* Relationship (17th-18th Centuries)", *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, 8/2 (2021), pp. 177-210. The author used *sicil*s, but also introduced other archival materials.

4 İzzet Sak, "Konya'da Köleler (16. Yüzyıl Sonu - 17. Yüzyıl)", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, IX (1989), pp. 159-97; İzzet Sak, "Şer'iyye Sicillerine Göre Sosyal ve Ekonomik Hayatta Köleler (17 ve 18. Yüzyıllar)" (doctoral dissertation), Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi, 1992; Halil Sahillioğlu, "Slaves in the Social and Economic Life of Bursa in the Late 15th and Early 16th Centuries", *Turcica*, 17 (1985), pp. 43-112.

5 Fırat Yaşa, "Slaves Holding Slaves: *Mükâtebe* Contracts, *Velâ* and a Probate Inventory in the Seventeenth-Century Crimean Khanate", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 67 (2014), pp. 133-60; Yannis Spyropoulos, "Slaves and Freedmen in 17th- and Early 18th-Century Ottoman Crete", *Turcica*, 46 (2015), pp. 177-204; Ron Shaham, "Masters, their Freed Slaves, and the Waqf in Egypt (Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries)", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 43 (2000), pp. 162-88.

qualitative and quantitative methods of research to arrive at a more meaningful comparison and conclusions.

Secondly, the freedmen agency and the variety of ways they participated in the intellectual, economic, military and political networks in the Ottoman Empire are still very much under-researched questions. Indeed, it is clear that the relationship between the former master and freedmen did not end after the manumission, but this legal fact is not sufficient in its own right to allow us to understand better the social lives of freed slaves, with all of its nuances. What were the options available to freedmen to prosper or live a relatively satisfying fulfilled life? So, what does the claim of dependence mean in practical terms? What were they able to do, and where lay the social constraints? To what extent they were social actors, capable of acting, and to what degree their actions were bounded by the social structure, or more adequately, arguably, by the social networks? Could all freed slaves be viewed as a single unified group; where we can make generalisations, and where it is unjustified? A lot of serious questions require an in-depth analysis of new sources and a comparison with the data which has already been known.

This paper aims to fill the previously-described gaps in knowledge and answer the question of agency and interagency of the freed slaves in the Ottoman Empire by using the examples preserved in the Sharia court records of Sarajevo, recorded from the 16th to 18th century.[6] Although it is possible to find several short studies

6 For this study, I have investigated three Sarajevo *sicil*s from the 16th century, the only surviving court protocols of Sarajevo from that period. Among other records, these important primary sources include 30 documents with valuable information about the lives of 61 freedmen and freed women. Together with this, numerous other records about slavery and particularly illegal enslavement disputes from the Sarajevo *sicil*s were also included in the account. Unfortunately, there are no surviving *sicil*s of Sarajevo from the 17th century. Moreover, I have examined the additional 34 *sicil*s of Sarajevo compiled in the 18th century, which allowed me to reveal 13 documents about manumission, and data on eight more freed slaves. This is much less compared to the 16th-century court protocols, but it needs to be pointed out that slavery was a less widespread phenomenon in Bosnia in the 18th century than it had been in the times of Ottoman conquest and expansion. However, the aforementioned records are valuable as they were previously unknown and unused in historiography. Therefore, we know very little about slavery and dependence in 18th-century Bosnia. In the described manner, all surviving *sicil*s from the period before 1800 are included in this analysis. Also, this research benefited greatly from the data on manumitted slaves in Sarajevo recorded in the *tapu tahrir* registers. I examined a total of 287 records on

on slavery and freedmen referring to Ottoman Bosnia, it needs to be emphasized that the discussion on these questions has been opened.[7] However, they were not systematically researched and all of the available primary sources have not been explored. Moreover, the approach used in such studies is traditional and isolated from the developments in social sciences. Notions like social structure and agency have not been discussed in the above-said context.[8]

Given that this article depends on terminology from the social sciences and applies these concepts to data gathered from Ottoman sources, it is essential to clarify what I mean by agency and how I identify it within archival materials.

The term agency is used here to designate the power people had (including slaves and freed slaves) to act in ways that shaped their life experiences and trajectories. Sociologists usually employ this term to comprehend an individual's independent capability or ability to act on one's free will. Together with this, it has also been asserted that individuals can be constrained by the social structure shaped by various influencing factors such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, customs etc. The topic has sparked continuous discussion within sociology, as recent researchers seek to identify a point of balance between structure and

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freedmen in the *tapu tahrir* registers of Bosnia: 8 in the year 1489, 69 in 1530, 56 in 1542, 141 in 1565, and 13 in 1604. Only a part of these records has been included in this analysis as I decided only to use the cases which are relevant to the major problems discussed in this study. To better understand these numbers, I need to clarify that certain freed slaves were found in more than one register. For example, some freedmen recorded in the *defter* from 1542 had also been surveyed in the *tapu tahrir* register from 1530. All in all, I consider this to be a valuable basis for making conclusions on the agency of freed slaves in early modern Ottoman Sarajevo.

7 Alija Silajdžić, "O slučajevima ropstva zabilježenim u sudskom protokolu sarajevskog kadije iz 1556/1557 godine", *Glasnik Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u Federativnoj Narodnoj Republici Jugoslaviji*, III, 8-12 (1952), pp. 240-55; Behija Zlatar, "O sudbini ratnih zarobljenika u Sarajevu u 16. stoljeću", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 40 (1990), pp. 259-66; Behija Zlatar, *Zlatno doba Sarajeva* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost Sarajevo, 1996), pp. 111-16; Adem Handžić, "O gradskom stanovništvu u Bosni u XVI vijeku", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 28-29 (1978-1979), pp. 251-53.

8 The ideas on the interplay of social structure and agency were not employed in the traditional historical studies on slavery in Bosnia, although such questions have been discussed in social sciences for decades. It is interesting that the authors who have been writing on slavery and freedmen in Bosnia were not even following much of the developments in social sciences in their own time. We may speak here about the lack of an interdisciplinary approach, which arguably limited the scope of their achievements.

agency.[9] Having in mind the theoretical notion that agency can manifest in both individual and collective forms, this research also employs the term interagency to highlight the interactions of individuals in collective actions. The primary question here is how we identify a particular human action in various sources, which may lead us to the dilemma: to what extent is a certain behavior shaped/caused by the social structure, and when is it the outcome of personal choice? Ultimately, to comprehend any behavior, it is essential to understand both the specific social structure and individual agency. This relationship represents a kind of interplay between the two. Human beings are not automata and their free will cannot be denied. It has been recognized that slaves acted as social agents, albeit within a framework where their ability to act independently was greatly restricted.[10] Moreover, structure cannot exist without agency, as it would not be present without the actions of individuals who create the social system. However, once a social system is in place, it can be enabling as well as constraining.

For instance, a freedman residing in Ottoman Bosnia existed within a social framework shaped by interpersonal interactions. As an individual, he always had the option to act, reflecting the concepts of free will and personal choices. A freedman might choose where to purchase a specific item, where to worship, with whom to associate, where to work, and in what way, among other decisions. No matter what decision he makes, we should consider his actions (or at least the majority of them) as demonstrations of his agency. Thus, every social participant operates as an agent in this sense. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that all decisions are confined by a social framework, indicating that individuals make their choices under the constraints imposed by the societal system. When

9 On the concept of agency in social sciences as well as on the debate on the interplay between social structure and agency see John Robb, "Beyond Agency", *World Archaeology*, 42 (2010), pp. 493-520; Barry Barnes, "The Macro/Micro Problem and the Problem of Structure and Agency", *Handbook of Social Theory*, eds. George Ritzer and Barry Smart (London: Sage Publications, 2001), pp. 339-52; Barry Barnes, *Understanding Agency: Social Theory and Responsible Action* (London: Sage Publications, 2000).

10 Despite these limitations, we can observe individuals who escaped or defied their masters, indicating their voluntary actions or agency. For details on this topic, refer to Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (eds.), *Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire* (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2020). Additionally, a very important indicator of agency is observed in cases where enslaved individuals opted to commit crimes in order to survive. Toledano, *As if Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East*, pp. 153-203.

a freedman decides to engage in religious practices, he does so based on what the social structure makes accessible to him. When he purchases a home, he operates within the regulations established by the social system. If he holds the position of a military leader or a craftsman, he is engaging in his profession according to the established social system. This illustrates why we describe the social structure as constraining. Conversely, it can also be enabling since it allows individuals to thrive by adhering to and supporting the social norms.

To comprehend the agency of freedmen and freed women, one must look at the range of options available to them within a societal framework. These options underwent significant changes upon their emancipation, yet not all freed individuals enjoyed the same variety of choices even after obtaining legal freedom. Their trajectories and employment possibilities would differ widely, as this research will demonstrate. This research contends that the variations can be more effectively explained by considering the sociological concept of the interplay between social structure and agency.

It is important to highlight that this research is distinct from previous studies on the agency of freedmen in other regions of the Ottoman Empire as it more closely ties the concept of agency to sociological discussions regarding the "interplay between social structure and agency", a connection that was not elaborated sufficiently in the existing historiography.[11] Nevertheless, although there are some overlapping ideas in my research and Wagner's (for example, regarding donations accepted by slaves), it is crucial to remember that we are discussing entirely different regions with divergent objectives in our respective papers.[12] My paper seeks to enhance our understanding of Bosnia's history, which is not the focus of other historians who have examined slavery and abolition in various Ottoman territories. Nevertheless, I also believe that our research is complementary. Furthermore, it needs to be emphasized that some data presented in my work

11 Connerman and Şen have explored the concept of slave agency within the Ottoman Empire. While their research has significantly contributed to the conversation surrounding agency in the Ottoman context, it is important to note that they do not present comprehensive data on the "interplay between social structure and agency." The term interplay was not even mentioned, even though it has been a part of sociological discussions. Nonetheless, they acknowledge that agency is linked to particular social contexts and can only be understood in relation to others. Conermann and Şen (eds.), *Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 11-30, 213-36.

12 Wagner, "'Free as other Freeborn' or Just Another Form of Dependency?", pp. 1-14.

may also be beneficial to the broader field of Ottoman studies. For example, I found instances in Bosnia where former slaves stood up against their prior masters.[13] This is crucial for comprehending the agency of freedmen and their decision to act autonomously, a subject that lacks parallel instances in Wagner's work, who primarily discusses the issue of freedmen's dependence.

To achieve the above-mentioned goals, this paper will rely on the approach known as prosopography, or collective biography. Prosopography has for decades been used by social historians to explore the characteristics of a group of actors in history through the collective study of their lives.[14] The social actors who are the focus of this research are former slaves and I have developed a set of questions to better understand the group which in Ottoman sources carried the common designation of *mu'taḳ*, or *atīḳ*, i.e. the freed slave.[15] Thus, it should be emphasized that this paper does not target to learn more about any specific historical person but to answer big questions about the Ottoman social history, social processes and integration of the manumitted slaves in the Ottoman provincial society. After realizing that most cases recorded in the court documents provide us only with fragmented information about the lives of the slaves, I decided to present the most representative examples, together with offering a qualitative and quantitative analysis of all the cases found in the registers. However, to better achieve the main goal of this paper, I have also included the data on freed slaves which

13 For instances of enslaved individuals showing defiance towards their masters, refer to Toledano, *As if Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East*, pp. 191-203; Y. Hakan Erdem, "Magic, Theft and Arson: The Life and Death of an Enslaved African Woman in Ottoman İzmit", *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: Histories of Trans-Saharan Africans in 19th Century Egypt, Sudan and the Ottoman Mediterranean*, eds. Kenneth Cuno and Terence Walz (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2010), pp. 125-46; Conversely, the topic of the defiance and resistance exhibited by freedmen in communication with their former masters/emancipators is not as well-documented.

14 On the Ottoman court records and the collective biographical approach, see Wagner, "'Free as other Freeborn' or Just Another Form of Dependency?", pp. 2-3. For insights into the application of prosopography in Ottoman studies and instances of utilizing this approach to investigate the military and administrative officials in the Ottoman Empire, specifically those who served as *beylerbeyi* and *sancakbeyi*, refer to Metin Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants. The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government 1550-1650* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). Also, see the influential paper on the concept of prosopography: Lawrence Stone, "Prosopography", *Daedalus*, 100/1 (1971), pp. 46-79.

15 Note for the transliteration system for Arabic-script languages: For Arabic and Ottoman Turkish languages, this paper follows the slightly modified IJMES system.

were recorded in the cadastral surveys, endowment deeds, as well as in the Ottoman lawbooks and legal literature.

Future research, as it has been previously stated in this introduction, should lead us to a collective project of writing a comparative history of the freed slaves in the Ottoman Empire. The following chapters, however limited in terms of scope and sources employed, as any other similar research, will hopefully shed more light on several neglected questions, getting us a step closer to the prosopography of the freed slaves in the Ottoman Empire.

Freed Slaves and the Concept of Freedom

Writing about the agency of freedmen and freedwomen in an Ottoman borderland society is a task which could hardly be completed without first giving a short introduction to the legal concept of freedom and manumission in the Islamic world. Several historians have been dealing with this issue, and this study needs to present and evaluate the recent developments and debates in historiography. Therefore, I would like to point out the significance of a question posed lately by V. Wagner in her work on manumission and dependence in the Ottoman Empire. Wagner questioned the situation of manumitted slaves and introduced the following dilemma: Were the freed slaves "free like other freeborn people", or was it just another form of dependency?[16] The author argues for dependency and informs us about the said legal formulation, provided here under quotation marks, with a claim that all manumission papers contain it. Although it has been recognized that there were slight variations to the above-said formulation, none of them have been presented in the mentioned paper.

The same as Wagner, I have also encountered the manumission documents which contain the phrase "free like other freeborn people". However, together with confirming the use of such a formulation at the Ottoman courts, I argue that presenting additional variations, which the said author dubbed as "slight", is important for us to reach a deeper insight into the question of how freedom,

16 Wagner, "'Free as other Freeborn' or Just Another Form of Dependency?", pp. 1-14; Wagner, "Modes of Manumission", pp. 205-24. For additional information regarding the idea of freedom in Islamic legal texts, refer to Anna Kolatz, "How to Approach Emic Semantics of Dependency in Islamic Legal Texts: Reflections on the Ḥanafī Legal Commentary *al-Hidāya fī Sharḥ Bidāya al-Mubtadī* and its British-Colonial Translation", *Slavery and Other Forms of Strong Asymmetrical Dependencies. Semantics and Lexical Fields*, eds. Jeannine Bischoff and Stephan Conermann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), pp. 179-203.

manumission and slavery had been perceived in the legal practice of Ottoman courts. Therefore, the rest of this chapter will present and comment on one of these variations, found in a 16th-century Sharia court protocol of Sarajevo.

In a document dealing with the emancipation of a Croatian female slave, recorded in 1558, it was declared that her master, Pervane, the son of Timur, had manumitted her for the sake of God. Furthermore, the document contains the following statement in the Arabic language:

"So, the mentioned female slave became free and an owner of herself, like other freeborn people. Whatever [rights] pertain to them, they are also valid for her, and whatever [obligations] are valid for them, they also apply to her. Nobody shall be left with an option to hold her in slavery. There shall be no powers over her as if she is a property, except for the right of *velā* (*walā*), which belongs to the *mevālī* [the masters/patrons of the freed slaves]".[17]

As seen from the above-said example, it was considered important by the court to describe the legal change which occurred with the act of manumission. The formulation that a manumitted female slave was from there on free as other freeborn people, which has also been established by the previous authors, immediately comes to the attention. However, the above-mentioned document provides us with more data about the meaning of freedom from the legal point of view. More than anything else, it is meant not to be a speaking property anymore, which was controlled, sold, or inherited as any other commodity. This was characteristic of slaves, as they were at the disposal of others, subjected to the will of their owners. The very act of manumission, therefore, brought an important change, as the freedwoman could not be legally controlled by others in such a fashion. Instead, it was stated that a freed woman from there on was the owner of herself, which implied the newly acquired legal capacity for making her own decisions and choosing her life trajectory. The choices were not limitless but needed to be in line with the legal rights and obligations of other people who were deemed free in the Ottoman Empire.

Nevertheless, it does not mean that there were no restrictions to the status of manumitted slaves. The above-said document mentions an exception, which makes a key difference between the freeborn people, and the manumitted slaves.

17 *"Fa-ṣarāt al-jāriyah al-madhkūrah ḥurrah ve mālikan li-nafsihā [ka-]sā'ir al-aḥrār al-aṣliyyāt lahā mā lahunna wa-alaiha mā alaihinna fa-lam yatbaq li-aḥadin alaiha sabīl riqq wa-lā salṭanah mulk siwa 'l-walā' al-thābit li-mawālī ['l-'utaqā']*". GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 417.

A special legal relationship, called *velā* was formed between the freedmen and their former owners. This allowed the master to inherit a former slave in case he did not have any agnates. Also, the former owner became liable to fines incurred by the freed slave.[18]

All these ideas of freedom, manumission and slavery could be tracked down in the available Islamic legal texts. However, the said example demonstrates that the court practice in Sarajevo was following this body of works, as well as that it is important for us because it shows that the framework for freedman agency, which included general ideas on what a freedman could do, and how he could not be treated, is provided succinctly in the cited passage.

Therefore, is this enough to talk about dependency? From the point of view of the Islamic law, dependence is not a legal term. Thus, the Ottoman court documents, understandably, do not use such an expression. What they do describe, however, is a freedom with some limitations, or exceptions. Nevertheless, the restrictions applied to the freed slaves still did not change the fact that they were legally perceived as free and that this was a key factor for understanding the framework in which their agency occurred. The former owners and freed slaves entered a new relationship after the manumission. This new link of theirs could be designated as a kind of patron-client relationship, from the legal point of view.

However, practically, in everyday life, it seems that dependency was a reality for some freed slaves, while for others it had a low practical value. Therefore, the answer to the mentioned question should not be generalized. Instead, throughout the remainder of this paper attention will be paid to discussing the dependency issue, as well as its practical value in the cases recorded in Ottoman Sarajevo. The principal idea I am proposing here is that legal aspects of the *velā* relationship are very important for discussing dependency matters, but I argue that it is still not enough to understand the variations in the level of dependency. To get a deeper insight into this question, we need to understand the complex nature of social interactions and that is a much broader field than legal theory and its implementation in the probate inventories. The examples I have encountered in the primary sources, which will be presented in the following chapters, are intended to shed more light on this matter and substantiate my claims about the shifting practical value of dependency in different situations.

18 For more information on the types of patronage (*velā*) in Islamic law see İpşirli Argıt, "Freed Imperial Court-Affiliated Slaves and Their Former Masters", pp. 177-87.

The Rise of an Egyptian Slave to Honour and Respectability

Understanding freedmen's agency in Ottoman society rests upon our ability to identify and analyse texts which contain information that freedmen acted in ways that shaped their own destinies and life trajectories. On the other hand, it is of crucial importance to provide evidence about situations where the social structure, i.e. the complex and interconnected set of social arrangements, relationships, and institutions, shaped the experiences, choices and behaviour of manumitted slaves. Having in mind both of these concerns, as well as the Bosnian context which lies in the focus of this research, the case of Vefai (*Vefaī*) Hasan Efendi, a former slave in Egypt, who ended his life path in Sarajevo. Hasan Efendi has already been noticed as a calligrapher, merchant, benefactor, and pilgrim, which makes his life story very interesting for this research.[19] However, his slave background is unknown in historiography, so the first task in this chapter is to provide clear proof that Hasan Efendi was, indeed, a manumitted slave. After establishing his slave status as a fact, this chapter will use the data from primary sources to explain why his case is important for understanding the life chances and agency of freedmen in the Ottoman Empire.

In 1771, the protocol of the Sharia court in Sarajevo recorded a probate inventory of the deceased Vefai Hasan Efendi, the son of Abdullah, a person described by the officer of the court as an Egyptian (*Mıṣırlı*, *Mıṣrī*), and a calligrapher (*ḫaṭṭāt*).[20] Although several historians previously used this source, none of them explained a very important note about the division of Hasan Efendi's estate, which makes it clear that he had been an enslaved person who obtained his freedom by the act of manumission. The fact that Muhammed Zekeriyya Çelebi was listed among the lawful heirs of the deceased with a remark that he was an heir by the right of *velā* (*velā'en aṣābesi olup*) speaks unambiguously about Hasan Efendi's slave background. According to the precepts of the Sharia law, the legal relationship between a manumitted slave and his former master did not end with the act of manumission, and a former master, from there on designated as patron (*velā*), lawfully enjoyed inheritance rights over the possessions of a freed slave. However,

19 For previous research on Hasan Efendi, see Markus Koller and Arifa Ramović, "Die Integration eines ägyptischen Händlers in Sarajevo in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte und Kultur Südosteuropas,* 3 (2001), pp. 149-57; Hatidža Čar-Drnda, "O integraciji nekih Egipćana (Misirijun) u bosansko društvo", *Prilozi*, 37 (2008), pp. 31-43.

20 GHB, *Sicil* no. 11, pp. 24-6.

this regulation applied only in cases when the freedman did not leave behind any male agnates as heirs. Furthermore, this patron-client relationship between freedmen and their ex-owners carried a legal designation of *aṣābe-i sebebiyye*, which needs to be distinguished from the inheritance rights based on the blood kinship (*aṣābe-i nesebiyye*). The Islamic jurists explained that the inheritance rights which flow from the *velā* relationship could pass to the former master's male agnates, in case he dies before his freed slave.[21] As it has been established in this research, the latter scenario was exactly the case that occurred in the probate inventory of Hasan Efendi.

We do not know much about Hasan Efendi's life in Egypt, nor about the time when he gained his freedom. However, owing to a newly-discovered document, issued by a court in Egypt, and recorded as a copy in a Sharia protocol of Sarajevo, it is possible to learn important details about Hasan Efendi's life trajectory. The purpose of the mentioned document, compiled in 1773, is the appointment of the legal representative of Muhammed Zekeriyya, responsible for collecting his share of the inheritance left by Hasan Efendi. From that document, we learned that Vefai Hasan Efendi was originally a slave (*ǧulām*) and later a freed slave (*mu'taḳ*) of El-Hacc Zekeriyya, an inhabitant of Kairo, Egypt, who was also the father of the previously mentioned Muhammed Zekeriyya.

The social rise of Hasan Efendi started with the act of manumission granted to him by his former master. For a freedman, this meant a whole new world of possibilities. Although the legal bond with his former owner did not completely stop with this act, as it has been previously explained, the primary sources clearly show us that the manumission signalised a possibility for agency and interagency on a completely different level. For example, after El-Hacc Zekeriyya died, Hasan Efendi, as his freed slave, even managed to marry Zekeriyya's widow, Nefisa Hatun, the daughter of Abdullah.[22] This is a very interesting case and speaks volumes about the possibilities available to the freed slaves. Before this, historians have only established that some former masters married their slaves and freed female slaves, and even that situation was described as exceptional. However, none

21 İpşirli Argıt, "Freed Imperial Court-Affiliated Slaves and their Former Masters", pp. 177-87.

22 *Muḥammed Zekeriyyā ibn Elḥāc Zekeriyya Ayntabi (?) ve vālidesi Nefisa ḫatun bint Abdullah El-Beyża nāmān kimesneler meclis-i şer'a gelüp şöyle taḳrir-i kelām ve ta'bīr ani'l-merām iderler ki pederim El-ḥāc Zekeriyya'nuñ mu'taḳu'l-aṣl ǧulāmı Vefā'ī Ḥasan Efendi pederim mezkūr el-ḥācc Zekeriyyā vefāt idüp vālidem mezbūre Nefisayı kendüye tezvīc ve zevce-i menkūḥa medḫūl bahası olduḳdan soñra*...GHB, *Sicil* no. 15, p. 20.

of the studies consulted in this research mentioned the situation in which a freed slave married the widow of his former master.[23] As the above-said examples demonstrate, the father of Hasan Efendi, as well as the father of his newly wedded wife Nefisa, bore the name of Abdullah. This name had often been used to conceal the non-Muslim origin of a slave, so it would not be uncommon that both of them were manumitted slaves of non-Muslim origin. We may only speculate about this, but it is an interesting possibility that needs more primary evidence to conclude this question.

Nonetheless, this whole situation was rather an exceptional situation for a former slave. Not only that a freed slave married a widow, but that widow had a male child with her previous husband. Therefore, in this interesting life twist, the said freedman also came into position to be the husband of a woman whose son, Muhammed Zekeriyya, inherited the legal rights his father had as a patron (*mevlā*) of the above-said freed slave, including the right to inherit him in case he was not survived by any male agnates.

After the manumission, Hasan Efendi earned his livelihood as a merchant who engaged actively in transregional trade within the Ottoman Empire, an activity that accrued him most of the wealth recorded in his probate inventory. A slave could be engaged in various economic activities, including trade, but not for his account and only under the consent of his master. The manumission changed that as this was the key point that unlocked new horizons for Hasan Efendi. From there on he was able to engage in trading activities for his own account and had the power to shape his life trajectory.

How he started with this activity is not known for now, as well as we do not have the information about his capital formation. The former masters used to help their former slaves with the initial capital, but available sources do not provide us with such information in the case of Hasan Efendi. Nevertheless, his probate inventory contains the data that he had a business partner (*şerīk*) by

23 For the works that mention former female slaves who married their previous owners, see Suraiyya Faroqhi, "From the Slave Market to Arafat: Biographies of Bursa Women in the Late Fifteenth Century", *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, 24/1 (2000), p. 16. For the claims that the marriage of female slaves to their former owners was an exceptional situation, see Madeline Zilfi, *Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 134. The information on legal treatment of marriages between masters and female slaves, as well as masters and former female slaves, see Sak, "Şer'iyye Sicillerine Göre", pp. 36-9.

the name of İbrahim Beşe. Out of the 1,117,584 *akçe* recorded as the estate of Hasan Efendi in his probate inventory, the amount of 888,000 *akçe* represented his share of the capital invested in his partnership with İbrahim Beşe.[24] Making business partnerships was a common practice throughout the Early Modern Islamic world. In the case of Hasan Efendi, it also represented the way the existing social structure was influencing the life of an individual. Furthermore, it needs to be considered as an important factor that helped Hasan Efendi to outgrow the local economic context and participate in the regional economic networks.

Having in mind the goals of this research, it is also a very important indicator. It demonstrates that in the case of Hasan Efendi, we may speak not only about his individual agency but also about the collective agency.

Hasan Efendi's merchant activities were noticed by the 18th-century members of the Ottoman learned class in Sarajevo. Molla Mustafa Başeski, a famous chronicler, recorded in his *Mecmū'a*, that Hasan Efendi, an Egyptian merchant (*Mışır bāzergānı*) and a calligrapher (*ḫattāt*), brought an ostrich and two "peculiar rams" to Sarajevo in 1766-1767 (1180 AH).[25] Molla Mustafa did not provide us with any data, whatsoever, about the slave background of Hasan Efendi. However, he did perceive the occupational characteristics of Hasan Efendi at the time when he stayed in Sarajevo. Owing to his remarks, we know that he made quite an impression as a merchant, calligrapher and benefactor.

To understand the social standing of Vefai Hasan Efendi it is also very important to point out that, in his probate inventory, an honorific title *el-ḥācc* (i.e. *ḥacı*) was used when referring to him. The use of this title is proof that El-Hacc Hasan Efendi went to Mecca, as a pilgrim, completing one of the core Islamic religious duties. It is not known when he earned this title, but, surely, the use of such honorifics conveyed certain esteem and respect in the Islamic world, which is something that might be used in everyday life as a social capital.[26] The decision to make the pilgrimage is an indicator of his agency, free will and religious beliefs,

24 GHB, *Sicil* no. 11, pp. 24-6.

25 For the transcribed version of Mulla Mustafa's *Mecmū'a* and the above-said record, see in Kerima Filan (ed.), *XVIII. Yüzyıl Günlük Hayatına Dair Saraybosnalı Molla Mustafa'nın Mecmuası* (Sarajevo: Connectum, 2011), p. 76.

26 For social attitudes towards Muslim pilgrims in the Ottoman context, see Suraiyya Faroqhi, *Pilgrim and Sultans. The Hajj under the Ottomans 1517-1683* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, 1994).

but it also needs to be pointed out that such religious obligations may also serve as evidence of how social structure influences people and their actions.

It is clear from all of the above that Hasan Efendi as a freed slave was travelling widely. He lived in Egypt but also travelled as a merchant. Molla Mustafa mentioned that Hasan Efendi visited Bosnia, then went to Egypt, and that came back to Bosnia again.[27] This was quite a distance and the primary sources show us that travellers who undertook the same voyage were usually travelling on land and sea.[28] This was most likely the case with Hasan Efendi.

As a traveller, Hasan Efendi was not only a person who carried and sold goods, but he was also an agent of cultural diffusion. The most important example of this activity pertains to the field of Islamic art. It has been established that Hasan Efendi learned calligraphy in Egypt, where he was taught by Ahmed Şukri Efendi.[29] Vefai Hasan's use of the title *efendi* is probably connected with his education in this field as the title *efendi* was widely used by many other members of the Ottoman learned elite, including calligraphers. Thus, Hasan Efendi represents another important example of a freed slave turned a calligrapher. But his role in Bosnia was much greater than just demonstrating his calligraphic skills. Molla Mustafa recorded that Hasan Efendi taught calligraphy and even issued several diplomas to his students in Sarajevo, which gave him a place in the important process of cultural exchange and transfer of intellectual and artistic expression of the world of Islam in Bosnia.[30]

All things considered, Hasan Efendi is remembered in Bosnia also as a benefactor and a testator. According to the data recorded in the previously-mentioned Sharia court protocol, Hasan Efendi made a legal declaration of will and gave an instruction that 408,750 *akçe*, a one-third of his estimated estate, be subtracted

27 Filan (ed.), *XVIII. Yüzyıl Günlük Hayatına Dair*, p. 249.

28 For the description of a Bosnian Muslim's pilgrimage route in the 17th century, see Jusuf Livnjak, *Odazivam ti se Bože. Putopis s hadža 1615. godine*, trans. Mehmed Mujezinović (Sarajevo: Starješinstvo islamske zajednice u SR Bosni i Hercegovini, Hrvatskoj i Sloveniji, 1981).

29 Čar-Drnda, "O integraciji nekih Egipćana (Misirijun) u bosansko društvo", p. 37. In addition, a calligrapher named Ahmed Şukri Efendi was also one of the witnesses mentioned in a document dealing with the inheritance of Hasan Efendi, compiled in Egypt in 1773. It is probably the very same person as the previously mentioned Hasan's teacher. A copy of this document was recorded in the Sarajevo court of law's protocol. GHB, *Sicil* no. 15, p. 20.

30 Filan (ed.), *XVIII. Yüzyıl Günlük Hayatına Dair*, p. 249.

from his assets and awarded for various purposes he specifically declared. For example, a portion of the money was intended for covering the religious and administrative expenses of Hasan Efendi's funeral; a part of it was left for the benefit of two of his servants, whereas the majority of the above-mentioned sum, 203,996 *akçe*, was intended for the repair of four mosques, one Islamic school (*medrese*), and a drinking fountain in Sarajevo. Also, the will awards a written copy of the Qur'an, valued at 4,960 *akçe*, to the benefit of students in one of the *mekteb*s in the city of Sarajevo.[31]

A close look at his testament and related documents showed that Hasan Efendi demonstrated his piety by making this will, but also the sense for the needs of the Muslim community in Sarajevo. However, we do not know much about the portion of time Hasan Efendi spent in Sarajevo. His probate inventory shows that he did not own a house there. However, he was coming and going to the city and developed some kind of relationship with some of its inhabitants. The first time we find the data about his stay in Sarajevo was in 1766, while he died a few years later, in 1771. According to Molla Mustafa, he married his second wife in Sarajevo, the daughter of a Christian man by the name of Kamber. We know that she converted to Islam, which is why the probate inventory mentioned her name as Fatima, the daughter of Abdullah.[32]

The value of Hasan Efendi's assets upon his death was such that we may consider him a wealthy man, but not in the same league as the richest people in the city. The evaluation of his estate amounts to 1,117,584 *akçe*. To put this into perspective and better understand the wealth of Vefai Hasan Efendi, the distribution of wealth in probate inventories of Sarajevo has been made based on a Sharia protocol of Sarajevo from 1770-1771. According to the findings of this investigation, the estate of Hasan Efendi falls within the top 4% of the estates, with a remark that this protocol contains 98 inventories; the highest amount of assets totalled 9,388,646 *akçe*, while the worth of the lowest inheritance was only 3,880 *akçe*.[33]

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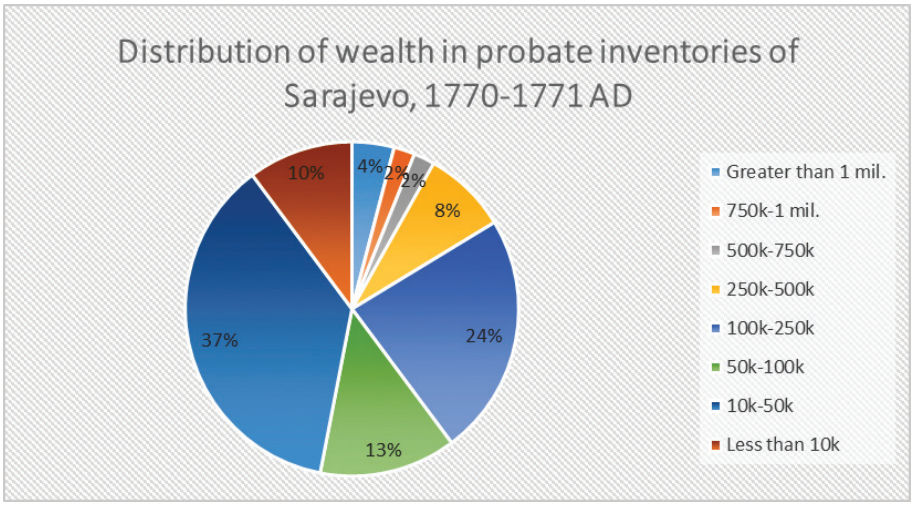
31 The text of the testament if recorded in a Sarajevo court protocol. GHB, *Sicil* no. 11, p. 57.

32 Filan (ed.), *XVIII. Yüzyıl Günlük Hayatına Dair*, p. 76, 249.

33 GHB, *Sicil* no. 11.

Chart 1



After subtracting administrative costs, as well as the one-third of assets which were to be divided according to the will (*vaṣiyyet*) of the deceased, the rest of the inheritance mass was distributed among the lawful heirs; in this case, we are speaking about the two wives of the deceased and Muhammed Zekeriyya, a son of the man who manumitted Hasan Efendi. Each wife was allocated 89,227 *akçe*, while the bulk of the assets went to Muhammed Zekeriyya, 535,365 *akçe*. Also, it needs to be emphasized that several objects found in the possession of Hasan Efendi, mostly various weapons, were not a part of his estate, but were declared as trusted objects whose rightful owner was Muhammed Zekeriyya.[34]

Emerging from the analysis provided in this chapter is the conclusion about the agency of a freedman by the name of Vefai Hasan Efendi. It is clear that Sharia rule about the *velā* relationship between a manumitted slave and his former master and his descendants legally did not end after the manumission, so this norm also reflected itself in the practice of the Sarajevo Sharia court. However, despite such a patron-client relationship, Hasan Efendi, as a former slave, found a lot of space to make his own decisions and socially prosper. Practically, during his lifetime he married the widow of his former master, married a second wife, engaged in regional trade, travelled to the pilgrimage, taught calligraphy, issued diplomas, had servants, accrued wealth, enjoyed using various luxury items, in-

34 GHB, *Sicil* no. 11, pp. 24-6.

teracted with people in a different manner; moreover, he also made important decisions about his will and contribution to the local community. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Hasan Efendi's life story, in short, shows that he left his mark on the world, while he rose to honour and respectability in Egypt and Bosnia. Whatever were the legal restrictions that stemmed from his status as a manumitted slave, they were mild and during his lifetime he was not restricted to prosper and act and live freely. Practically, only after he died without descendants, i.e. when the inheritance issue became actual, these legal bonds became more apparent, and it was this occasion when the consequences of being an ex-slave were more visible than ever before. But at that point, he was already a few feet below the ground, which arguably gives a different tone to the whole story.

From a Dalmatian Slave to the Ottoman Military Commander

Understanding the agency of freedmen in Early Modern Bosnia would hardly be accomplished without discussing the life stories of manumitted slaves who made their career in the military-administrative apparatus of the Ottoman Empire.[35] Although there is a handful of freedmen whose life trajectories might be of interest in this regard, the historiography has usually emphasized the social rise of Murad Bey Gajdić, a man who managed to go all the way from a slave of Dalmatian origin to the position of a district governor (*sancaḳbeyi*) in the borderland districts (*sancaḳ*s) of Klis and Požega (Pojega).[36] By using the examples from the biography of Murad Bey, this chapter aims to explain the differences in the agency of former slaves who pursued military-administrative careers in comparison to the agency available to freedmen whose occupational choices were tied to other fields of activity. What is of particular importance here is to discuss the questions of loyalty, and dependence as well as the integration of former slaves into the fabric of Ottoman society. To achieve these goals, the primary sources have been re-examined and due attention has been paid to the context in which the information about Murad Bey's life was originally mentioned.

35 For a study concerning the involvement of emancipated slaves as soldiers in the Ottoman fortresses in Hungary, consult Klára Hegyi, "Freed Slaves as Soldiers in the Ottoman Fortresses in Hungary", *Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders (Early Fifteenth – Early Eighteenth Centuries)*, eds. Géza Dávid and Pál Fodor (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 85-91.

36 For previous research on Murad Bey Gajdić, formerly also known as Tardić, see Behija Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 2010); Kristijan Juran, "O podrijetlu i šibenskoj rodbini kliškog sandžakbega Murat-beg Gajdića", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 66 (2016), pp. 231-9.

The slave origin of Murad is certain as in the pious endowment deed of Gazi Hüsrev Bey, compiled in 1531, he was designated as a freed slave.[37] However, we do not have any kind of data about the period of his life spent in bondage. The most likely way to become a slave in 16th-century Bosnia was to be captured in one of the Ottoman raids (*akın*) against the neighbouring Christian territories. The area where Murad was taken captive and enslaved was probably in the vicinity of Šibenik. As it was claimed by a 16th-century Venetian historian, Marino Sanudo (1466-1536), "Morat" (Murad), a *voyvoda* in the service of Gazi Hüsrev Bey, was a native of Šibenik, and even had a brother who was a member of the Christian clergy in this port city at the Adriatic seaside.[38] Moreover, such a claim was also confirmed by a Hungarian chronicler Miklós Istvánffy (1538-1615). At the beginning of the 17th century, he recorded that "Amurates" (Murad) had been a Dalmatian and a native of Šibenik (*natione Dalmata e Sebenico alumnus eius*).[39] The newest research has convincingly established that Murad's family name was Gajdić, while almost all of the previous historiographic accounts mention it as Tardić.[40]

The destiny of Murad, after he was taken captive is shared by many other enslaved Christian prisoners. He ended up in the hands of a Muslim slave owner; in his case, it was Gazi Hüsrev Bey, a famous warrior, Bayezid II's grandson, and a distinguished member of the Ottoman military class. The prisoner from Dalmatia, whose Christian name is still unknown to us, converted to Islam, took the Muslim name we know him by, and subsequently underwent a process of acculturation through which he adopted the core values and practices associated with the Islamic culture. Having in mind his future career in the army, it is likely that he received some kind of military training. This was a common practice in Islamic polities; Muslim potentates often recruited and trained slaves (*ğulām*) who later became soldiers.

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37 Mevlüt Çam and Rahman Ademi (eds.), *Bosna-Hersek Vakfiyyeleri*, vol. 5 (Ankara: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2016), p. 40.

38 Marino Sanudo, "Rapporti dela Republica Veneta coi Slavi meridionali. Brani tratti dei diarj manoscritti di Marino Sanudo, 1501–1517", *Arkiv za povjestnicu jugoslavensku*, VIII (1865), pp. 232-4.

39 Nicolai Isthvanfi Pannoni, *Historiarvm de Rebvs Vngaricis*, vol. 34 (Colonae Agrippinae / Cologne: Antonij Hierati, 1622), p. 148.

40 Juran, "O podrijetlu i šibenskoj rodbini kliškog sandžakbega Murat-beg Gajdića", pp. 231-9.

The fact that Murad's owner was a district governor and military commander, and not a merchant or a learned man, for instance, is arguably the key moment that influenced the rest of his life. This opened up a new career path for him and allowed him to develop a life trajectory for which he is today known in history. Gazi Hüsrev Bey manumitted Murad at some point, which has still not been determined, and took him into his service. Although Murad was legally considered "free as other freeborn people" (*sā'ir aḥrār-ı asliyyīn gibi ḥür*) after the manumission, like the usual legal formulation reads,[41] it still needs to be pointed out that their relationship entered a new phase that could best be described as the patron-client relationship. In the rest of this chapter, I will argue that the level of dependency between a freedman and his former master is much higher in cases when a freedman continued to stay under the direct military command of his ex-owner like it was the case with Murad and Gazi Hüsrev Bey.

Marino Sanudo's claim that in 1526 Murad was a *voyvoda* was, moreover, supplemented by the information that he was also the head of the doorkeepers (it. *Capicı Bassa*) in the service of the district governor of Bosnia, which at this point was Gazi Hüsrev Bey.[42] The Ottoman version of this term is *ḳapıcıbaşı*. It is of utter importance to have this term as it shows that Murad Voyvoda stayed in the retinue of his former master as a head of doorkeepers, which is a duty that originally involved dealing with security issues. Furthermore, its holder could also be entrusted with various military and administrative tasks which were considered to be in the best interest of the *sancaḳbeyi*. After *kethüdā*, this was the most important position in the *sancaḳbeyi*'s retinue. The appointment of Murad Voyvoda to the position of *ḳapıcıbaşı* is important as it shows that he was considered a loyal and trustworthy element which stayed in the vicinity of Gazi Hüsrev Bey. Furthermore, it also meant that his employer and patron thought that he could have been entrusted with important security duties.

The level of trust between them went to even greater heights, and a few years afterwards Murad *Voyvoda* advanced in service. The cadastral survey of the *sancaḳ* of Bosnia compiled between 1528 and 1530, mentioned Murad *voyvoda* as the steward or deputy (*kethüdā*) of *sancaḳbeyi* (*mīr-i livā*).[43] This meant that by this time Murad had reached the highest rank among the Gazi Hüsrev Bey's staff, and

41 For information on the use of the above-said legal formulation, see Wagner, "'Free as other Freeborn' or Just Another Form of Dependency?", pp. 3-4.

42 Sanudo, "Rapporti dela Republica Veneta coi Slavi meridionali", p. 234.

43 BOA, TT.d 157, pp. 584-92.

afterwards had assisted his patron in military and administrative matters, while also acting as his agent in various matters.

The activities of Murad as the head of the doorkeepers and as deputy of the *sancaḳbeyi* need to be considered as a kind of proxy agency, or actions which he was doing on behalf of others, in this case on behalf of his patron and superior commander, Gazi Hüsrev Bey. It is possible to find documentary traces of such activities in the available primary sources. For instance, in 1530 Murad was at the head of the group of 130 armed horsemen that welcomed the Habsburg envoy in the vicinity of Sarajevo and led them to the audience of Gazi Hüsrev Bey.[44] Also, the *sancaḳbeyi* continuously entrusted Murad, his loyal deputy, with various other military and administrative duties. For instance, Murad Voyvoda was in charge of organizing the building of a small river navy at the mouth of river Zrmanya after the conquest of the Obrovac fortress.[45] On another occasion, in 1533, while corresponding with Nicolò Trivixam, the Venetian general-governor of Dalmatia (*proveditor di tutta la Dalmatia*), about certain borderland matters, Gazi Hüsrev Bey stated that he planned to write to Murad Voyvoda to deal with the issues in question.[46] All this is very important, as it gives us a clue about the relationship between Gazi Hüsrev Bey as a *sancaḳbeyi* and Murad Voyvoda as his subordinate officer and a man who enjoyed his trust.

During all this time, at least from 1526 to 1537, Murad was also considered to be a *voyvoda*. This was the title the Ottomans adopted from the Slavic languages. Throughout centuries it was used in various meanings. Here it primarily designated lesser military commanders/officers in the provincial army. Usually, *voyvoda*s were members of the district governor's retinue and often acted as his agents. They assisted the district governor, while also enjoying a *dirlik* for their services; the Ottomans used this expression to designate a right of the mentioned members of the military class to directly collect a part of the state's revenue for their pay, on a specifically designated area. At such a territory, *voyvoda*s were often tasked to perform some kind of security and executive duties, which is why we could also find them under the term *subaşı*.

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44 Benedikt Kuripešić, *Putovanje kroz Bosnu, Srbiju, Bugarsku i Rumeliju 1530* (Banjaluka: Besjeda, 2006), pp. 22-3.

45 Seid Traljić, "Izvoz drva preko Obrovca krajem 16. stoljeća", *Radovi Instituta Jugoslovenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Zadru*, 21 (1974), pp. 261-2.

46 Franjo Rački, "Izvodi za jugoslavensku povijest iz dnevnika Marina ml. Sanuda", *Starine Jugoslovenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, XXV (1892), pp. 125-6.

According to the Ottoman military inspection register (*yoḳlama defteri*), compiled in 1526, before the Battle of Mohács, Murad Voyvoda was registered as a *ze'āmet*-holder and a man who was in the retinue of Gazi Hüsrev Bey, while the estimated worth of revenue he was awarded was 20,147 *akçe*.[47] A few years after, in the cadastral survey, we find additional information about his *dirlik*, i.e *ze'āmet*, so we may see that it encompassed the revenue from several villages dispersed throughout various parts of the *sancaḳ* of Bosnia: Vratar, Boraç, Kamenska and Saray (Sarajevo).[48] This *ze'āmet* is proof that Murad Voyvoda was a part of the Ottoman military class, as well as that he enjoyed the status of a lesser officer. His principal obligation was to ride to the sultan's campaigns as a well-armed horseman, accompanied by other armoured retainers (*cebelü*) and servants (*ġulām*), according to the customary law.

The information that he was riding to campaign as a *merd*, or a man who was a part of Gazi Hüsrev Bey's retinue is particularly telling as it shows us that the bond with his former master continued to exist at various levels and that Murad continued to be subordinated to him. However, this time subordination was part of the picture because of the military rules and hierarchy regulations.

Murad Voyvoda excelled as a skilful warrior and took part in many successful military campaigns against the Venetian Republic, Habsburg Monarchy and Hungarian Kingdom. For instance, some of his exploits include the Battle of Mohács (1526), the conquest of Jajce (1527), the conquest of Obrovac fortress (1527), the Battle of Gorjani (1537), the conquest of Klis (1537). He also took part in the military operations in Hungary and Croatia during the early 1540s.[49] A famous Ottoman 17th-century chronicler, İbrahim Peçevi, wrote that Murad Voyvoda, the later Murad Bey, was a "brave commander (*voyvoda*)" and mentioned him with the attribute of *ġāzī*, which is a title given to those who had been considered brave and victorious against the opponents of Islam.[50]

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47 Ahmed S. Aličić, "Popis bosanske vojsku pred bitku na Mohaču 1526. godine", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju,* XXV (1975), p. 199.

48 BOA, TT.d 157, pp. 584-92.

49 Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg*, pp. 40-2, 53, 151-53.

50 *Kendi'nüñ Ğāzī Murād nāmında bir voyvoda-i bahādirī ve nice bunuñ gibi yirlerde isbāt vücūd itmiş*. İbrāhīm Peçevī, *Tārīh-i Peçevī*, vol. I (Constantinople: Maṭba'a-'i Āmire, 1283), p. 192.

Finally, Murad was promoted to the position of the *sancaḳbeyi* of Klis in 1537 and became known as Murad Bey. In 1541, he was appointed the district governor of Pojega (Požega).[51] By obtaining the rank of *sancaḳbeyi*, Murad was officially introduced into the higher group of Ottoman military commanders, which brought him the so-called *ümerā* status.[52] These people were awarded the *dirlik*s worth more than 100,000 *akçe*, and served as *sancaḳbeyi*s, with a possibility to advance even further. From there on, he was entitled to the style characteristic for the people with the *ümerā* status, as it is recorded in the cadastral survey of the *sancaḳ* of Bosnia in 1541: "the paragon of the noble commanders, the district governor of Klis, Murad Bey".[53]

Interestingly enough, according to the information provided by Peçevi, Murad earned the promotion to the *ümerā* status and the position of the *sancaḳbeyi* of Klis owing to the recommendation of his former master and commander, Gazi Hüsrev Bey.[54] This promotion changed their previous relationship as Murad Bey was not directly subordinated to Gazi Hüsrev Bey in the way he had been under his command before this appointment. As his former master, based on the Sharia law provisions, their patron-client relationship continued to exist as the former master was still considered the *velā* or patron of his freedmen. However, the practical value of this regulation needs to be re-addressed. Gazi Hüsrev Bey died in 1541 without heirs, which meant that Murad Bey did not have a patron anymore, and the *velā* relationship between them legally stopped being effective.

The bond of trust between the two men surpassed the field of military and administrative activity. In 1531, Gazi Hüsrev Bey appointed Murad Voyvoda as an administrator of his pious endowment in Sarajevo. This was an act of trust and he even designated him as the "best of his freed slaves" (*li-aṣlaḥi utaqāihī*). This honourable and responsible service was reserved for Murad and his descendants; the founder specified that this service may pass to other people only Murad's bloodline ever dies out.[55] Indeed, it was an act of trust which speaks volumes

51 Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg*, pp. 152-153; Fazileta Hafizović, *Kliški sandžak. Od osnivanja do početka Kandijskog rata (1537-1645. godine)* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 2016), pp. 271-72.

52 For information on the *ümerā* status, see Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants*, pp. 31-56.

53 In 1542, Murad Bey is mentioned in the following manner which clearly shows his *ümerā* status: *kıdvetü'l-umerāi'l-kirām Murād Bey mīr-i līvā-'i Klis*. BOA, TT.d 211, p. 592.

54 Peçevī, *Tārīh-i Peçevī*, vol. I, p. 193.

55 Çam and Ademi (eds.), *Bosna-Hersek Vakfiyeleri*, vol. 5, p. 40.

about the way in which the said slave owner perceived the moral values and abilities of his former slave.[56]

Furthermore, Murad Voyvoda was also mentioned in another Gazi Hüsrev Bey's endowment, deed compiled in 1537. This time the administrator rights in the endowment were reserved for the legator himself. After he passed away, Murad was named as the administrator of the endowment. On this occasion, Murad was designated as "the most righteous and the best of his servants (literally: slaves)" (*li-a'dali abīdīhi wa-aulāhum*).[57] According to the Sharia regulations, and even Gazi Hüsrev Bey's endowment deed, the administrator's service in pious endowments should have been awarded to pious and righteous men. This may serve as an indicator that Murad was at least perceived to be such a man in the eyes of his former master.

It is also interesting that this endowment deed offers an insight into the nature of their relationship. Although many years had passed, and Murad was by no means a slave any more, the term "slaves" (*abīd*) was used to describe the group he was in. A literal translation does not fit well in this context, which is why I have opted to translate it as a servant, which is much closer to describing the relationship between the said two men. Regardless, it is clear that, in 1537, Gazi Hüsrev Bey still thought that Murad Bey was subordinated to him, even though he was undeniably a free man by the standards of the Sharia law. Of course, a possibility that the Sharia court magistrate chose the exact wording in this endowment deed also exists, i.e. that the word "slaves" was used in this case under the magistrate's influence.

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56 It was not unusual in the Ottoman Empire to find former slaves as administrators of pious endowments. For example, Yüksel wrote that the administrator of Hayreddin Paşa's endowment in Istanbul was Hacı Hüsrev, the son Abdullah, a former slave. İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimarisinde Kānûnî Sultan Süleyman Devri (926- 974/1520-1566)*, vol. VI (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 2004), p. 184. There are many such examples throughout the Ottoman Empire. However, it is not the aim of this article to elaborate on this practice in detail, nor to claim that there was something unique in Bosnia in this regard. On the contrary, by making this comparison I want to point out that the integration of Bosnian provincial society into the Ottoman Empire was as much a cultural matter as it was political. Ultimately, this means that dominant practices in the field of slavery as well as in the management of pious endowments were replicated throughout the Empire, in the centre and the peripheries.

57 Esad Duraković, "Husrev-begova vakufnama za medresu u Sarajevu", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 56 (2007), pp. 166, 173.

Not only was Murad Bey an administrator of his former master's endowment, but he also founded his own endowment for the mosque in the fortress of Klis.[58] The Ottoman cadastral surveys provide us with clear proof of the existence of Murad Bey's mosque, as well as of the endowment established by him to cover the costs of the mosque's maintenance and functioning.[59] This may be used as additional evidence to argue that Murad Bey was living the life of a devoted Muslim, which gives us an insight into his individual choices and behaviour. On the other hand, the mentioned act also demonstrates the structural influence on the individual, as the reigning culture and customs put constraints on the way how an individual expresses his agency and individual beliefs.

Murad Bey died in 1545 and was buried in a mausoleum (*turbe*) in the courtyard of the Gazi Hüsrev Bey's mosque in Sarajevo, next to his former master, commander and patron. At the end, this chapter concludes that Murad Bey's life story presents an example of a successful integration of a former slave into Ottoman society. It shows that, regardless of his Christian roots, and even a brother who was a member of the clergy, his life choices were different. Many Christian slaves attempted to flee to the territories under Christian control, but, as far as we know, it was never the case with Murad. He decided to stay in the Ottoman Empire and to live his life as a successful member of the Ottoman military and administrative elite. Throughout his career, he had an upside curve and finally managed to rise to the position of a district governor (*sancaḳbeyi*), who was also considered a highly-ranked military commander. It was a position whose holders may rightfully be considered members of the power elite. As much as Murad Bey owed his success to his characteristics and efforts, his accomplishments should also be attributed to the fact that he received considerable support from his former master, Gazi Hüsrev Bey. Historians have often described them as close associates, and their relationship as a friendship.[60] This may partly be the case, but it

58 Interestingly enough, Ayverdi knew about this mosque in Klis, but wrote that its founder was unknown. However, this question was later resolved in historiography. Today it is clear that it was a part of the Murad Bey's endowment. See Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanli Mimârî Eserleri: Yugoslavya*, II/3 (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1981), p. 207.

59 For the data on Murad Bey's endowment, see Hafizović, *Kliški sandžak*, pp. 271-272. Also, the cadastral survey of the *sancak* of Klis in 1585 contains a Muslim neighbourhood in the town of Klis, which formed around the mosque built by Murad Bey (*cemā'at-ı cāmī'-i şerīf-i Murād Bey el-merḥūm*. BOA, TT.d 622, fol. 235A.

60 For an explanation which presents Murad Bey as the "closest associate" of Hüsrev Bey, see Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg*, p. 153. Other authors tend to see Murad Bey as a "loyal friend" of

is also true that their bond was asymmetric after the manumission, and that Gazi Hüsrev Bey had an upper hand in it. Therefore, it is more suitable to speak about the patron-client relationship, subordination, loyalty, and dependence. Furthermore, the analysis made in this research showed that the freedmen were much more influenced by their former master's authority in cases when they continued to serve under them as soldiers or their military and administrative staff. One could easily say that the more political and military power the former master had, the more likely that he could have longer and more seriously influenced the life chances of his manumitted slaves.

Disputes between Freedmen and their Former Masters

Throughout previous chapters, I have argued that, from the legal point of view, the former master was considered to be a patron (*velā*) of his freed slave, and that their relationship after manumission was often asymmetric, particularly in cases when the former master was also a direct military commander to his ex-slave. However, it still does not mean that there were no cases of disputes between freedmen and their former owners. Through this research, I have established that such disputes existed.[61] Recognizing that this is a relatively overlooked area of study, it is of importance to present and discuss one such case I have encountered in a Sharia court protocol of Sarajevo. The goal of this chapter is, thus, to provide a deeper insight into the life challenges and individual agency of freedmen.

The case presented here is a dispute that arose in Sarajevo in 1557 between a former slave owner El-Hacc Üveys, the son of Süleyman, and his freed slave (*mu'taḳ*) by the name of Yunus, the son of Abdullah. El-Hacc Üveys filed a lawsuit with the court and accused Yunus that he abandoned (*i'rāż*) the agreement they had since the time Yunus was still his slave. The plaintiff claimed that he granted the manumission to Yunus, with a condition that he stay by his side as long as he is alive. Although the defendant denied (*inkār idecek*) the existence of

Gazi Hüsrev Bey. Seid Traljić, "Gazi Husrev-begov boravak u Dalmaciji", *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke*, V-VI (1978), p. 13.

61 Historians mostly paid attention to disputes between former masters and slaves, which were designated as freedom suits. For such disputes in the central parts of the Ottoman Empire, see White, "Slavery, Freedom Suits, and Legal Praxis in the Ottoman Empire, ca. 1590–1710", pp. 526-56. However, the analysis of the historiographic literature has shown that disputes between former slaves and freedmen are still understudied, and, therefore, not known very much.

such a condition, the witnesses testified in favour of the plaintiff. Nevertheless, the court did not reach any kind of verdict at that point.[62]

The case becomes even more interesting, as later that year, El-Hacc Üveys appeared before that court and stated that, for the love of God, he had previously freed his slave Yunus, and granted him the manumission document (*ıtḳnāme*).[63] Although they later had a dispute (*münāzaʿa*), El-Hacc Üveys renounced the right to make any claims in the future about the money and assets he had previously donated to him.[64]

The above-said is interesting and important as it shows that freedmen were showing initiative in their lives, and acted against their eventual agreements with the former masters when they assessed that it was in their best interest. This is not unusual as it has been established that even slaves were not passive subjects but people who had wishes and made their life choices[65] even if it was against the law. They were pursuing what they thought was in their best interest. The same conclusion goes for the manumitted slaves. Although the former owner might have been considered a patron of his freed slave, in this case, he could not stop the opposition which came from the latter. That is very important to understand as it proves that freed slaves enjoyed exactly what they had been granted – freedom. However, there are some restrictions in that regard, which are becoming more visible when it comes to the question of inheritance. Also, it needs to be pointed out that the opposition to the former slave owner was much more possible and successful in cases where these owners were not so powerful themselves. Arguably, in cases where we are speaking about the highest political and military actors in the Ottoman state, the opposition of former slaves would have been a much more difficult challenge, but not an impossible task.

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62 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 6.

63 The wording in the original court record was crucial for understanding the aforementioned legal dispute. Yunus was not identified as a *müdebber* or a slave who received a conditional promise of freedom, which sometimes happened in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, Yunus was simply labelled as a freed slave (*muʾtak*), and it was noted that he obtained the manumission document (*ıtḳnāme*). When this document is issued, El-Hacc Üveys made a declaration (*şoyle kavl karār itmışdüm*) that Yunus should stay with him for the duration of his life (*kayd-ı hayāt*). Keeping this in mind, I portray Yunus as someone who was once a slave and was given a specific request by his master at the time of his emancipation. GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 6.

64 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 292.

65 Conermann and Şen (eds.), *Slaves and Slaves Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, pp. 18-9.

Accepting Donations

The newly-manumitted slaves in the Ottoman Sarajevo faced multiple challenges after their emancipation. Arguably, one of the biggest obstacles they had to deal with was the shortage of economic resources. As they were hailing from relatively distant territories, mostly from the neighbouring Christian regions, they had been separated from their original environments, including their own family, kin, and friends. To economically survive in Sarajevo, the freedmen needed to forge new relationships and gain access to the local social and economic networks. Assistance of their former masters was vital for them in that regard as they often provided them with a springboard which facilitated their successful social integration. This chapter investigates the form and significance of such donations and seeks to explain why the question of donations is important for understanding the freedmen's agency.

The donations of former slave owners to freedmen have been addressed before. Previous contributions have established that making gifts to freed slaves was a social custom present in many districts (*sancaḳ*s) throughout the Ottoman Empire.[66] This research confirms that the same practice could also be confirmed in the court documents of the Sharia court of Sarajevo.[67] Providing material gifts and participating in charitable activities (*in'ām ve iḥsān*) were widespread activities in the Islamic world, which were very much lauded in the Islamic political and didactic literature. The very idea of doing good in such a manner, in all likelihood, could have directly or indirectly influenced the former slave owners.

Anyhow, we should not look at this practice only from the perspective of the masters. From the point of view of the freedmen, the act of accepting a donation should also be understood as a type of individual agency. It seems plausible to conclude that former slaves could have even influenced their former masters to provide them with the assistance needed to make a decent livelihood in Sarajevo.

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66 Sak, "Şer'iyye Sicillerine Göre", pp. 130-40. Wagner, "Modes of Manumission", pp. 205-24; Wagner, "'Free as other Freeborn' or Just Another Form of Dependency?"; Betül İpşirli Argıt, "Manumitted Female Palace Slaves and Their Material World", *Slaves and Slaves Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2020), pp. 189-209.

67 The question of donations to former slaves has previously only been briefly touched upon. See Silajdžić, "O slučajevima ropstva zabilježenim u sudskom protokolu sarajevskog kadije iz 1556/1557 godine", p. 252.

We cannot claim that every former master helped his slave in such a manner, but certainly, some of them did it. The data we have at our disposal shows that in some cases former owners even presented their freed slaves with a gift of residential properties. It is of crucial importance for any slave to have a roof over her/his head. The masters were well aware of such a problem and there are examples attest to their decisions to help them solve this huge life challenge for a newly manumitted slave.

For instance, in 1557, Periş, the daughter of Abdullah, presented her manumitted female slave by the name of Şems-i Duha with a gift (*hibe eyledüm*) of a house in Sarajevo.[68] A similar case was recorded in the same year, but this time the witnesses testified at court that a person by the name of Hızır Bali donated (*hibe*) a house he owned to the two freed female slaves of a woman mentioned by the name of Elifa, the daughter of Iskender.[69] The document did not specify the relationship between Elifa and Hızır Bali, but it clearly shows that freedwomen could have also received gifts from people other than their former masters.

As seen from the above examples, the full property rights were granted in both cases, and the objects in question have been surrendered (*temlīk ve teslīm*) to these freedwomen. According to the Sharia rules, for a gift to be valid, three important preconditions need to be completed: the declaration of a gift by the donor; the acceptance of the gift by the beneficiary; and the actual transfer of possession.[70] All of the requirements were met in the mentioned documents. Furthermore, the acceptance of these gifts needs to be understood as agency.

The assistance of former masters was sometimes realised in other forms. As it can be observed in the court document issued in Sarajevo, in 1557, Mehmed *sipahi* made a will in which he left 1,000 *akçe*, and a horse to his freed slave Keyvan, the son of Abdullah.[71]

Similar data about the gifts for the freedmen were also recorded in the same court protocol. Üveys, the son of Abdullah, donated (*hibe ve temlīk*) movable property to his former slave, including some money (*nuḳūd*), and certain goods

68 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 118.

69 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 173.

70 For a 16th-century compendium of Sharia regulations on gift giving, applicable in the Ottoman Empire, see Ibrahīm al-Ḥalabī, *Multaqa al-Abḥur* (Der-i saʿādet/Constantinople: Maṭbaʿa-i Osmāniyye, 1309), p. 142.

71 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 108.

(*esbāb*). The gift was accepted by the freedman. However, we don't have any data about the process by which a former owner decided on the form of the gift. The amount of money was, unfortunately, not specified.[72]

Seeing money as a potential gift to former slaves is not unusual in the Ottoman Empire. Money was essential for a freedman as it represented a major resource that could have helped them to support themselves, at least for some time. It is reasonable to assume that wealthier masters had a much greater capacity to provide their former slaves with more valuable gifts. However, did they do so, or did they do so every time, is a question open to debate. Also, it is possible that slaves somehow influenced their master's choice by indicating what they needed the most.

Furthermore, some slave owners used other options to help the freedmen. The institute of *vaṣṣiyyet* (testament)[73] allowed them to make disposition of their property in a way that would have taken effect only after their death. In 1538-1539, Kemal Bey, a military commander and an inhabitant of Sarajevo, freed seven of his slaves, together with the unspecified goods they had in their possession (*cümle esbābiyle*). Additionally, he also declared in his will that 24 more slaves would be freed upon his death (the so-called *müdebber*). To help them start their new life, Kemal Bey made a bequest in their favour and decided that 18 of them would receive 1,000 *aḳçe* each. Also, six child slaves (*küçük ġulām*), were to receive 500 *aḳçe* each, the same as five other unspecified slaves (*ġulām*).[74] As will and donation are different institutes in Sharia law, they are treated in separate chapters in the legal compendiums. However, having in mind the fact that this was also a way of helping freedmen, I decided to mention it in this chapter, for the sake of comparison.

From the above-said examples and explications, the conclusion arises that the integration of former slaves into the social life of Ottoman Sarajevo was assisted by their former owners by providing them with the donations in form of residential property, moveable objects or domestic animals. The freed slaves could have also received such gifts from persons who were not their previous masters but were most likely in some kind of a connection to their previous masters.

72 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 173.

73 For information on the institute of *vaṣṣiyyet* in Islamic law see the following legal compendium: al-Ḥalabī, *Multaqa al-Abḥur*, p. 195.

74 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1, p. 37.

Although it cannot be claimed that every former slave owner presented his freedmen in the mentioned way, it is now clear that some of them did. Furthermore, the data assembled in this chapter, as well as the analysis provided, demonstrate that the very act of accepting the donations represented an important manifestation of individual agency available to the freedmen and freedwomen in Ottoman Sarajevo.

Economic Relationship with Former Masters

When legal formulations mention that a manumitted slave is free, and owns himself/herself, it undoubtedly implies the freedmen's capacity to enter various legal relationships with the local population.[75] The court documents are full of examples which show that freedmen abundantly exercised this right and that it was an important manifestation of their agency. This chapter focuses on presenting the economic relationship of slaves with their former owners as it is an important question for understanding the process of their social integration and the role of former masters in this process.

The success of the previously described aim rests upon the ability to find relevant examples in archival sources. The first of such examples is related to credit activities and situations where freedmen were borrowing money from their previous owners. It was recorded in the Sharia court protocol of Sarajevo in 1566 that Hüsrev, the son of Abdullah, a freedman of Croatian origin, stated at the court that he managed to reside in Sarajevo with the help of a loan (*karżdan ikāmet bulup*) given to him by his former master, Seyfüddin.[76]

The nature of this loan has not been explained in detail. The options were the interest-free loan (*karż-ı ḥasen*), and an Islamic financing arrangement in which an interest was not technically present, but was substituted by some kind of a legal workaround that had been intended to bring benefits to the moneylender.[77]

Whatever it was, the fact that freedmen were borrowing from their previous owners leads us to believe that such loans might have reaffirmed the already exist-

75 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1, p. 417.

76 GHB, *Sicil* no. 2, p. 458.

77 On credit arrangements in the practice of the Sharia courts in the Ottoman Empire, see Ronald Jennings, "Loans and Credit in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records: The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, XVI/2-3 (1973), pp. 168-216.

ing asymmetric relationship between them. In other words, credit relationships and debt are important factors which could allow a former master to further influence his freed slave. On the other hand, it might have been beneficial for the freedmen. In the above-mentioned case, Hüsrev, as a freedman, declared that this loan allowed him to reside in Sarajevo.

Borrowing was not the only economic relationship that has been ascertained between ex-slave owners, and their freedmen. Through this research, I have also found evidence that in certain cases the mentioned parties entered a contractual relationship which included the estate sales in Sarajevo.

For instance, the previously-mentioned Periş, the daughter of Abdullah, a woman who donated a house to her manumitted female slave by the name of Şems-i Duha, also made a contract with her in the very same document.[78] Together with receiving the gift, the freedwoman managed to buy other properties from her ex-owner. Namely, via the contract of sale designated as *bey'-i bāt*, she bought another two houses, equipped with hearths (*ocaḳlı evler*), a garden, a barn (*āḫur*), and an object of presumably smaller proportions, described shortly as a house for the bachelors (*azabḫāne*). The contract also included the movable goods related to the afore-said properties. All of them had been sold to the buyer for the agreed-upon price of 15,000 *akçe*, which the seller fully received, as it was asserted. It was also noted that the buyer took actual possession of all of the listed properties.[79]

The existence of a contractual agreement between a former master and her freedwoman is apparent from this document. However, it is not known how a freed slave came to a position to have 15,000 *akçe* needed to meet an agreed-upon price. Was she perhaps assisted by a third party to complete the purchase? All these are the open questions. However, it is beyond any doubt, whatsoever, that contractual activities of former slaves and their ex-masters occurred, and this claim could be furnished with evidence from the primary sources.

The question of the economic relationship between freedmen and their former owners is very important for understanding the process of integration of former slaves in Ottoman Sarajevo. The sources analysed in this research, do not contain data about the slaves who continued to work for their ex-masters, except

78 For the legal regulations on sale in an Ottoman legal compendium, see al-Ḥalabī, *Multaqa al-Abḥur*, pp. 97-9.

79 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 118.

for the case of a freed slave Murad who stayed in the retinue of his former master Gazi Hüsrev Bey, and later even became a *sancaḳbeyi* himself. Aside from the mentioned case, it is a scarcely known problem in the history of Bosnia. However, this research has established other important facets of this question. I have concluded that ex-slaves sometimes borrowed money from their ex-owners and that they even managed to buy real estate from their former owners, which is clear proof of entering a contractual relationship. Both of these activities, borrowing money and buying real estate, show that former slaves were a part of the local economic networks and that they actively used an option to demonstrate their agency in the field of economic relations. This activity testifies to their decision-making and strategies for conquering the life challenges they faced in Early Modern Ottoman Sarajevo.

Contested Freedom

The biggest challenge for any freedmen was arguably the situation in which their free status was called into question. Such an action would have effectively jeopardized their freedom, potentially leading to their re-enslavement. To date, in various parts of the Ottoman Empire, historians have recognized situations in which freed slaves were requested by the court to provide proof of their freedom. Such requests were a part of legal proceedings in which their freedom had been disputed. There have been some interesting yet rare cases when the "proof of freedom" (*isbāt-ı ḥürriyet*) disputes arose several decades after the manumission had occurred.[80] As far as it has been known, an example of such a dispute is yet to be found in Sarajevo. On the other hand, available records contain data from various other court cases in which freedmen were challenged, and their freedom was called into question.

This chapter aims to present such court cases, as well as the strategies the freedmen used to prove their free status. However, it needs to be pointed out that this research only takes into consideration the contested freedom cases related to the manumitted slaves and not the cases in which slaves legally asked for freedom

80 Sak, "Şer'iyye Sicillerine Göre", pp. 130-38. White, "Slavery, Freedom Suits, and Legal Praxis in the Ottoman Empire, ca. 1590–1710", pp. 526-56; Joshua White, "Slavery, Manumission, and Freedom Suits in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire", *Slaves and Slaves Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2020), pp. 283-320.

claiming that they were originally free, but were illegally enslaved despite that claim.

To date, I have only been able to find the contested freedom cases in the 16th-century court protocols of Sarajevo, although the documents from the 18th century have also been included in this research. The analysis has shown that all of the recorded cases relate to the disputes of freedmen with the heirs of the deceased slave master who had relatively recently emancipated the slave. The following types of court cases were recorded: 1) cases in which a slave brought up a suit against the heirs who refused to recognize the slave owner's decision to emancipate a slave upon the predefined period, usually after the master's death; 2) the situations in which a slave owner manumitted a slave by declaring his decision shortly before embarking on a journey to Mecca as a pilgrim.

The first of the mentioned situations is known in the Islamic legal literature as *tedbīr*, while the slave who has been granted freedom under such predefined conditions was called *müdebber*.[81] The court registers from the 16th-century Sarajevo contain data about several cases in which a slave had been granted freedom, with a condition that it was to be effective only after the master's death. However, all of such cases will not be presented in this chapter, but only those in which the heirs of the slave owner contested the decision of the person who granted the manumission.

For instance, Ferhad, the son of Abdullah, a Hungarian slave, appeared before the Sharia court in Sarajevo claiming that he was a *müdebber-i mütlāk*, which meant that he was to be manumitted after the death of his master Hacı Derviş Ali, the son of Davud. As the mentioned slave owner had died, his heirs denied him the right he acquired by the master's declaration of will. Thus, Ferhad asked the court to rule in his favour, that the will of the deceased be fulfilled. This suit was successful as the claims he brought forward were supported by the testimonies of two witnesses.[82]

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81 For information on *tedbīr* and *müdebber*s, see Sak, "Şer'iyye Sicillerine Göre", pp. 119-26; Veruschka Wagner, "'Speaking Property' with the Capacity to Act: Slave Interagency in the 16th and 17th-Century Istanbul Court Registers", *Slaves and Slave Agency in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2020), pp. 213-36.

82 GHB, *Sicil* 1a, p. 182.

The second type of contested freedom suits found in the Sarajevo court records refers to the cases when a slaveholder granted a manumission relatively shortly before the end of his life, for example when he decided to embark on a journey to Mecca as a pilgrim.

The representative of the second type is the case of a Hungarian freedman Behram, the son of Abdullah. The mentioned individual who was designated as a slave (*ğulām*) in the document appeared before the court in Sarajevo and stated that El-Hacc Hüseyin, the son of Abdullah, liberated him (*mālinden beni āzād eyledi*) before he went to the pilgrimage to Mecca. Moreover, Behram even claimed that his master left him in his will (*vaṣiyyet*) an amount of 1,000 *akçe*. However, all that has been renounced by the heirs of the deceased. Luckily for Behram both of his claims were confirmed by two eyewitnesses whose testimonies had been accepted by the court.[83]

The conclusion that arises from the analysis of the Sarajevo court protocols is that we still have not found any cases in which an ex-slave's freedom was questioned after a long or very period (years, decades), as in some other parts of the Empire. However, there were, at least, two scenarios for the contested freedom suits that did occur in Sarajevo. Both of them took place in a relatively short period after the manumission, or after the legal conditions for manumission became effective (in the case of the *müddeber* suits). These cases show that although a slave owner had liberated a slave before going on the pilgrimage to Mecca, or he had granted the slave a right to be free after his death, it was sometimes not accepted by his heirs. Interestingly, the heirs have sometimes renounced the manumission after the master's death, especially if a freedman did not have any written proof about his status. However, the Sarajevo court protocols provide us with clear evidence that freedmen made successful freedom suits against the former owner's heirs. In the end, it may be concluded that life in Sarajevo was not without challenges for them. Sometimes these challenges were considerable, and the greatest of them all was arguably any threat to their newly acquired freedom. Nevertheless, as shown from the evidence provided in this chapter, it was not an unsolvable life situation for the freed slaves, as they came out victorious in any case where they had the law, the court and witnesses at their side.

83 GHB, *Sicil* 1a, p. 140.

Pious Endowments and the Freed Slaves' Agency

Historiographical research on the pious endowments (*vaḳıf*) in the Ottoman world has shown that the institution of *vaḳıf* had an important impact on the population of Sarajevo under Ottoman rule. Moreover, it has been established that from time to time, freed slaves emerged as founders of the endowments, but also as their administrators (*mütevelli*).[84] However, none of these works used the examples found in the primary sources as a basis to discuss the issues of freed slaves' agency, and the structure versus agency debate in the case of freedmen and freedwomen. On the other hand, the said questions lie in the focus of this research. Therefore, this chapter will shed more light on the ways by which the freed slaves' agency influenced the local community in Sarajevo. Furthermore, it will be explained how the social structure may have impacted their individual decisions to found endowments, become their *mütevelli*s, or pursue the career of a mosque official financed by an endowment.

Before starting with the analysis, it needs to be pointed out that this chapter focuses only on former domestic and agricultural slaves released from slavery by the members of the military and administrative elites.[85] The people who were coming to power positions through the so-called *ḳul* system, based on the military recruitment method known as *devşirme*, are not a part of this paper.[86]

Although the word *ḳul* originally designated a slave, the prevailing idea in Ottoman studies is that the *ḳul* status was used in many different ways, with

84 Zlatar, *Zlatno doba Sarajeva*, pp. 38-79, 102-19; Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg*, p. 109.

85 Toledano has noted the differences of opinion among scholars regarding who qualifies as a slave and who does not. Additionally, he contended that various forms of slavery existed within the Ottoman Empire. He distinguished military and administrative servitude, commonly referred to as the *kul* system, from other forms of slavery – *harem* slavery, domestic and agricultural slavery. He suggests that *kul* slavery is quite similar to *harem* slavery, which is the reason he occasionally refers to it as *kul/harem* slavery. To differentiate between individuals who were enslaved in name only versus those who were genuinely enslaved, he occasionally employs the term "real slave" or "true slave". For further details on this, see Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*, pp. 4-6, 21.

86 For general information on *devşirme* and *kul* system, see Gulay Yılmaz, "Becoming a Devşirme: The Training of Conscripted Children in the Ottoman Empire", *Children in Slavery through the Ages*, eds. Gwyn Campbell, Joseph C. Miller, and Suzanne Miers (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), pp. 119-34; For the application of *devşirme* in Bosnia, see Aladin Husić, *Devširma u Bosni: o regrutaciji Bosanaca u janjičare* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 2023).

various connotations. For instance, the term *ḳul* indicated the slave origin of an individual. Moreover, it also designated a specific kind of state servants, members of the military and administrative elites, as well as their dependency, subordination, and obedience to the sultan.[87]

Freedom to act like other freeborn people also included the possibility for liberated slaves to dedicate their resources to pious and charitable purposes. There are not many endowments in Sarajevo founded by ex-slaves. However, the endowments established by them are valuable for discussing the nuances of slave agency in the Ottoman Empire.

A salient example of such a *vaḳıf* in 16th-century Sarajevo is an endowment of Şahdidar, the wife of Gazi Hüsrev Bey, a famous benefactor and a *sancaḳbeyi* of Bosnia. As recorded in her endowment deed, written in Arabic, Şahdidar was mentioned as a female slave and a property *(cāriyehā wa-mulquhā*) of Neslişah Sultan, the daughter of Selcuk Sultan.[88] Neslişah is a well-known person in historiography; she was the sister of Gazi Hüsrev Bey and a granddaughter of Sultan Bayezid II. Interestingly enough, Şahdidar's name was not mentioned in the text of the *vaḳıfnāme*, but historians have successfully managed to identify her by comparing the data from the endowment deed with other Ottoman sources.[89]

Şahdidar was wealthy enough to build a *mescid* (small mosque) in Sarajevo, together with an elementary school for the religious education of Muslim children (*mekteb*). For the upkeep and running of the mentioned buildings, Şahdidar endowed a sum of 100,00 *aḳçe*, of whom 3,000 *aḳçe* were used to build a *mekteb*. Together with this, she also endowed a house, that was to be sold at the market, while she alıso stipulated that an administrator should buy a parcel of land, or a shop, or a mill which would bring cash income to the endowment. All this was a revenue basis for the *vaḳıf*, a total of 115,000 *aḳçe*. It represented a capital that was loaned to the interested parties, with a profit (*ribh*) of 11%, which means

87 Various scholars highlight the ambiguity surrounding the term *kul* in relation to the Ottoman elite, suggesting it can be interpreted as a servant. For further details on this topic, refer to V. L. Menage, "Some Notes on the Devshirme", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 29/1 (1966), p. 66; Kunt, *The Sultan's Servants,* pp. 41-2.

88 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1, pp. 38-42.

89 Fehim Dž. Spaho (trans.), "Vakufnama Šahdidar, supruge Gazi Husrev-bega", *Vakufname iz Bosne i Hercegovine (XV i XVI vijek)*, eds. Lejla Gazić and Ahmed S. Aličić (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 1985), pp. 73-80.

that, through this economic operation, it generated a revenue of 11,500 *akçe* for the endowment.[90]

From the above-said example, we may see how social structure influenced Şahdidar to establish an endowment. Founding a *vakıf*, for attaining God's blessings, as well as to earn his grace at the Day of Last Judgement, was a very much praised practice in the Ottoman world. The endowment deeds are usually described as an ultimate act of piety. Moreover, it has also been considered as a charitable act, from which the local community benefitted. It seems plausible that living in Ottoman society, as a former slave, Şahdidar had also been influenced by the religious ideas mentioned in her *vakıfnāme*. Her husband Gazi Hüsrev Bey founded the biggest endowment in Sarajevo, which changed the landscape of the city while donating property in the form of *vakıf* was also practiced by many other men and women.[91] The very idea of establishing an endowment, as a charitable work which brings benefits to the community, and God's reward, was strongly supported by the *imām*s and other Ottoman learned men. All this makes it understandable why the idea of establishing an endowment may have been close to Şahdidar.

Nevertheless, as much as it is untenable to deny the influence of the existing social customs (i.e. the social structure), it is important to note that Şahdidar's decision was ultimately a personal choice, which clearly shows her agency. In the end, whatever the recommendation she had, founding an endowment is a personal choice, that one should make by his/her own free will. The important thing here is that as a free woman, Şahdidar had the opportunity to make this kind of choice, according to her wealth and personal preferences. As stated in the Islamic legal books, this kind of decision would be impossible for a slave, as slaves are unfree, bound to their master's will.[92] Therefore, a slave would have no capacity to legally act without her master in property matters.

The consequences of Şahdidar's decision to establish an endowment were very important for the local populace. The mosque she had built became a central part of the *maḥalle* (neighbourhood). In 1604, the cadastral survey recorded that

90 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1, pp. 38-42. Şahdidar's endowment and *maḥalle* which developed around her mosque in Sarajevo were also listed in the cadastral survey of the *sancak* of Bosnia compiled in 1604. See BOA, TT.d 742, pp. 16-7, 696.

91 For more information about the Gazi Husrev Bey's endowment, see Zlatar, *Gazi Husrev-beg*, pp. 67-117.

92 For information on the legal capacity of slaves in Islamic societies see al-Ḥalabī, *Multaqa al-Abḥur*, pp. 68-71.

41 married men (*müzevvec*), 23 unmarried (*mücerred*), an *imām*, and a *mu'ezẓin*, lived in the "*maḥalle* of the late Hüsrev Bey's wife's *mescid*" (i.e. Şahdidar's *mescid*). All of them were Muslims.[93] According to the Ottoman customs, making a mosque was very important for the city as it contributed to the urbanisation processes. Furthermore, a mosque was not just a place where people prayed, and educated their children. From the social point of view, it was much more than that. Mosque was a place where people communicated and socialized. All this was possible in the mentioned case owing to the endowment of a freed female slave, that married into the Ottoman elite.

The slaves who spent a part of their lives in Sarajevo did not just bequeath their property in this city. There is proof that some of them established *vakıf*s in other towns in the region. Previously in this paper, it has been explained that Murad Bey, a former slave of Gazi Hüsrev Bey, built a mosque in the borderland town of Klis, so there is no need to repeat all the details about this endowment. However, having in mind the topic of this chapter, it should be noted that, similarly to the Şahdidar's *vakıf* in Sarajevo, Murad Bey's mosque and endowment in Klis also played an important role in the social life of the local community and Ottoman urbanisation processes in the mentioned borderland region.[94]

The city of Sarajevo benefited also from the endowments of ex-slaves, which were established to support some of the already existing *vakıf*s. It was not possible for every man who wanted to donate his property and help the community to build a mosque or monumental objects. However, it was seen as beneficial to help the functioning of objects built by some other prominent endowment founders, or to finance a certain important service connected to them. Among other people, such a practice is confirmed in the case of certain freedmen and freed women, who had also been members of the Ottoman political elite. In the list of *vakıf*s registered in the *sancaḳ* of Bosnia in 1604, such endowments were listed behind a *vakıf* established by some other person with a short remark "attached to this" (*ilḥāk ilā ẓalike*). This means that such *vakıf* resources were considered to be an addendum to some other endowment, while the administrator of the original endowment was also named as an administrator of the *vakıf* who was considered to be attached to a previously established bigger endowment.

93 BOA, TT.d 742, pp. 16-7.

94 See the data on Murad Bey's endowment in Hafizović, *Kliški sandžak*, pp. 271-272. The information on the Muslim neighbourhood formed around Murad Bey's mosque in Klis is listed in the cadastral survey of the sancak of Klis, compiled in 1585. BOA, TT.d 622, fol. 235A.

For instance, Piyale, a freed slave (*atīḳ*) of Gazi Hüsrev Bey, donated 3,600 *akçe*, which were to be loaned to people with a profit rate of 10%. The money acquired by credit operations was to be used for covering some additional duties of the *imām* in the Ayas Bey's *mescid* in Sarajevo. Specifically, Piyale brought up a condition that, to earn this income, the *imām* should daily read/recite one of thirty parts in the Qur'an called a *juz'* (tur. *cüz'*).[95]

Ayas Bey's *mescid* benefited from the donation of another freedman. Murad, a freed slaved (*atīḳ*) of Ayas Bey, donated two of his shops (*dükkan*) and founded a *vaḳıf* whose purpose was to add additional income of 500 *akçe* to the *imām* of the Ayas Bey's *mescid*. The revenue was meant to be obtained by leasing out the said shops. To use these funds, the *imām* was required to read/recite daily one of thirty parts in the Qur'an, similarly as was stipulated in the above-said example of Piyale's endowment.[96]

The possibility for demonstrating agency was not only constrained to the role of endowment founder. Many freedmen accepted the position of endowment administrator in *vaḳıf*s founded by their previous masters. This was a widespread practice throughout the Ottoman Empire, and it is also possible to find such cases in Sarajevo. It is very important as it shows us how tight the relationship between the freedmen and their former masters may have been. Freed slaves were often the people with whom they put their trust. They stipulated not only that one of their slaves should be the administrator of their *vaḳıf*, but also that their descendants will perform the same duty in the future. However, after their statement of will had once been accepted by the court, and after the *vaḳıf* had been declared proper (*saḥīḥ*), the donor no longer had the opportunity to cancel his endowment, nor to change it.

For instance, Ayas Bey, a *sancaḳbeyi* of Bosnia, founded an endowment in 1477 whose revenue was intended for the running and upkeep of his mosque, a religious school for children (*mu'allimḫāne*), as well as for a bridge he had built in Sarajevo. The donor retained the position of the endowment administrator for himself. Upon his death, the best of the children of his freed slaves were bound to succeed him at the *mütevelli*'s post.[97]

95 BOA, TT.d 742, p. 684.

96 BOA, TT.d 742, p. 684.

97 Çam and Ademi (eds.), *Bosna-Hersek Vakfiyeleri,* vol. 5, p. 13; Hazim Šabanović (trans.), "Vakufnama bosanskog sandžakbega Ajas-bega sin Abdulhajeva", *Vakufname iz Bosne i*

Among other important endowments where the freed slaves held the administrator position, one should also mention the Gazi Hüsrev Bey's *vaḳıf*. As previously explained in this paper, in 1531 the donor put forward the condition that his freed slave Murad Voyvoda was to be appointed as an administrator. After the donor's death, his agnates should have succeeded him at the *mütevelli* post. In case there were none of them, the mentioned function was to pass on to the best of the donor's freed slaves, the sons of his free slaves; and if there were none of them too, then to their sons, and so on.[98]

Gazi Hüsrev Bey put a lot of trust in his freed slaves, and he also decided to prefer their descendants. Besides indicating an accession line that would have helped his endowment to continuously work, the donor wanted to take care of his freed slaves, or at least this is a valid assumption for some of them. This also tells us a lot about the bond that continued between freed slaves and their former masters.

Also, in some cases, the *vaḳıf* founders specified that the position of *imām* and *müʿezzin* was to be held by their former slaves and their descendants. The evidence for this claim is found in the will (*vaṣiyyetnāme*) of Kemal Bey, a founder of a mosque, a *mekteb* and a *medrese* in 16th-century Sarajevo. Furthermore, in 1541, Kemal Bey stipulated in his endowment charter that the imam post in his mosque, as well as the posts of *müʿezzin* and *vaḳıf* administrator, are reserved for his sons, and his son's sons, under the condition that they were deemed appropriate and worthy of it based on their knowledge (*li-man huwa al-mustaḥḥaḳ bi-ilmihī*). Nevertheless, if that condition had not been fulfilled, these posts were to be given to his freed slaves, and afterwards to their descendants under the very same condition. Kemal Bey's *vaṣiyyetnāme*, compiled in 1538/1539 (945 AH), additionally stipulates that all of the mentioned posts were to be given to "the best of this slaves" (*aṣleḥ-i uteḳāya şarṭ eyledüm*).[99]

The data from the cadastral surveys show that in various *maḥalle*s of Ottoman Sarajevo mosque officials. For example, in 1542 a freed slave (*muʿtaḳ*) by the name Mevlana Bedrüddin was an *imām* in the neighbourhood (*maḥalle*) of the mosque of Çekrekçi Müslihuddin in Sarajevo.[100] The same registers also contain proof that *müʿezzin* in the mosque of İskender Kethüda was a freed slave by the

Hercegovine (XV i XVI vijek), eds. Lejla Gazić and Ahmed S. Aličić (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 1985), p. 31.

98 Çam and Ademi (eds.), *Bosna-Hersek Vakfiyeleri*, vol. 5, p. 40.

99 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1, p. 37.

100 BOA, TT.d 211, p. 367.

name of Hasan. Both these officials were funded by pious endowments.[101] Also, the cadastral survey of the *sancak* of Bosnia, compiled in 1530, is valuable as it shows the slaves could also pursue the career of *şeyḫs* in some of the *ṣūfī* lodges.[102] It is recorded that Cafer, a freed slave (*atīḳ*) of İskender, was the head of a *ṣūfī* lodge (*şeyḫ-i zāviye*). He was the inhabitant of the neighbourhood of the Mustafa Bey b. İskender Paşa's mosque.[103]

Information on the mentioned occupations gives material to better understand the nuances of the integration of slaves into the social and cultural world of Ottoman Sarajevo. Moreover, these records illustrate the conclusion that freedmen were influenced by the social structure to pursue the mentioned careers, which, on the other hand, allowed them to influence their communities at various levels. However, these are just some of the social roles we may find freed slaves in the cadastral survey. Together with this, it is possible to find data which provides us with evidence that freed slaves in Sarajevo have also made their living as military commanders,[104] scribes[105] and various artisans. Although pious endowments were important sources of revenue that allowed some freedmen to make a living in Sarajevo, it needs to be pointed out that other ways seem to have been more widespread. For instance, most cases I have encountered in the primary sources are related to freedmen's engagement as craftsmen.[106]

The connection between freed slaves and the *vaḳıf* institution did not end with their roles as endowment founders, administrators, or mosque officials. As other free men, they were free to engage with the *vaḳıf* in a variety of ways, start-

101 BOA, TTd. 211, p. 401.

102 For more information on *ṣūfī* lodges and dervishes in Ottoman Bosnia, see Ines Aščerić-Todd, *Dervishes and Islam in Bosnia. Sufi Dimension to the Formation of Bosnian Muslim Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

103 BOA, TT.d 157, p. 244.

104 In 1565, Keyvan Voyvoda, an inhabitant of Sarajevo and a military commander, was a freed slave of Hüsrev Bey. BOA, TT.d 379, p. 19.

105 In 1542, Hasan, an inhabitant of Sarajevo and the freedman of Aydin Bey, was described as a scribe (*ḳātib*). BOA, TT.d 211, p. 389.

106 For example, in the cadastral survey of Bosnia from 1530, it is possible to find the following freed slaves as artisans in Sarajevu: tailors (*ḫayyāt*), saddlers (*sarrāç*), public criers (*dellāl*), barbers (*berber*), shoemakers (*ḫaffāf*), blanket manufacturers (*kebeci*) coppersmiths (*kazgānī*). BOA, TTd. 157, p. 244, 225, 244, 226, 242, 248. For information on other occupations that were practiced by the freedmen, see Handžić, "O gradskom stanovništvu u Bosni u XVI vijeku", pp. 251-53.

ing with borrowing money from endowments to leasing out its objects or being buried in the *vaḳıf* land. It would surpass the goals of this paper to name an example of every interaction between *vakıf*s and freedmen. However, I will mention one of them just to illustrate that there were different ways the freedmen could have benefited from an endowment.

For instance, Faik Voyvoda, a freed slave and a military commander, borrowed money from the Gazi Hüsrev Bey's *vaḳıf*. According to two documents recorded in a 16th-century court protocol of Sarajevo, his debt to the endowment was 10,000 *aḳçe*.[107] It was a considerable amount, and it shows that the institution of *vaḳıf* played an important role in supporting the freed slaves and integrating them into society. But this was not without problems. Faik failed to return his debt to the endowment, as previously agreed upon, which is why this case resulted in litigation recorded in court books.

In short, the analysis showed that the agency of freed slaves was very important for understanding the institution of *vaḳıf*, and its social role in Ottoman Sarajevo. Firstly, some of the freed slaves decided to establish their independent endowments or to donate resources to support the already existing bigger *vaḳıf*. In all of the cases mentioned in this chapter, the freed slaves who became donors were a part of the Ottoman military and administrative elite. There are only several such cases in which we can confirm that the donors were freedmen. However, it is still an open field and possibly some other examples may arise in the future. The activity of these donors, males and females, was very important for the urbanisation processes, while it also enhanced the social life of the inhabitants of Sarajevo. Secondly, the donors sometimes named freedmen and their descendants to undertake the position of endowment administrator. Thirdly, *vaḳıf*s and freedmen interacted in a variety of ways, similarly to all free men, starting from the credit operations to being buried in the *vaḳıf* soil. In all of these cases, one should take into account the individual agency of freedmen. All of the mentioned examples illustrate their ability to act. Understandably, this capacity was much higher in comparison with their capacity when they were slaves. On the other hand, together with psychological beliefs and cognitive processes, the examples analysed in this chapter showed that the social structure influenced the freedman's actions and that they generally conformed to the reigning values and customs of the Islamic cultural environment. Without taking this into account, the actions of freedmen and freed women cannot be properly understood and explained.

107 GHB, *Sicil* no. 1a, p. 302.

Conclusion

After carefully collecting and analysing the information on the lives of the freed slaves in Ottoman Sarajevo, it is now possible to offer conclusions on their integration into the social fabric of a town in a borderland province of Bosnia. Rather than focusing on a single life story, this paper aimed to use the collective biography approach to discuss the options available to freedmen after the act of manumission. Furthermore, the goal was to explain how the freedmen were bound by the social structure, and to what extent they were able to make decisions, shape their life trajectories and, ultimately interact with the community they were living in.

The analysis has shown that although all freed slaves were designated by the unifying umbrella term *mu'taḳ* or *atīḳ*, which means "freed slave", their life trajectories much differed from each other. That also means that their actions and strategies in coping with life challenges could vary greatly. While it is possible to find freed slaves as retinue members of their former masters and even those who later rose to the position of the district governor (*sancakbeyi*), others were living in poor conditions depending heavily on their previous masters. For most of the freedmen, we do not have any notion about their occupations. On the other hand, in other cases, the primary sources show that many freedmen were artisans, while others became scribes and even *imāms* and *mü'ezzin*s in the local mosques, *şeyḫs* in the *ṣūfī* lodges and *vaḳıf* administrators. There is also proof that one freed slave, who came from Egypt as a merchant, was also a calligrapher who even had students and issued diplomas in Sarajevo.

All this opens up a very broad array of opportunities for the freed slaves and makes it clear that they had been influenced by the social structure in different ways as slaves and also as freedmen. Most slaves in the Ottoman Empire were hailing from the non-Muslim lands and came into the empire as prisoners. Bosnia was a borderland province and many slaves were captured in it during the conquest times, but also in the neighbouring Christian territories. Later, many of the enslaved people converted to Islam and went through a process of acculturation and integration into the standards of the Muslim community. That was also the case with the freedmen and freedwomen in Sarajevo and it can be designated as an influence of the social structure on the freedmen. This implies customs, beliefs, norms, and culture in general.

Once in the Muslim world, freedmen had the capacity to act and influence the community they were living in. That varied greatly. However, slaves who

became military commanders were a part of the power structure and interacted with others within the existing hierarchy. Those freedmen who were a part of the religious establishment stood in the heart of the religious life in the Ottoman *maḥalle*. Freedmen who became artisans contributed to the developing urban economy of Sarajevo, while simultaneously making a living. Together with all of this, freedmen were becoming a part of the social world of Sarajevo, forming families, having children, and making friendships, but also acquiring enemies and getting into court disputes with other people. All that was a part of their social experience and it may be seen in the primary sources.

A very important kind of freed slave's influence on society may be observed through the institution of pious endowment. Several freed men endowed their property for charitable and religious purposes. This is a fine example of the interplay between agency and social structure. While it demonstrates how the community influenced them through the system of beliefs and social practices, it also shows how freedmen and freedwomen contributed to the very same community with their endowments but also through the testation of their estate, following the Sharia regulations.

The question which is very important for understanding freedmen's life and agency is their relationship with their former masters. From the legal point of view, after manumission freedmen were considered "free as other freeborn". However, a document used in this paper mentions an exception which says that a former master may have retained the right to inherit his former slave in case he died without agnates who could claim the inheritance. This shows that there was an uneven relationship between freedmen and former masters, where the freedmen had the upper hand. However, we may rightfully ask ourselves what is the practical meaning of this norm. Its consequences would only appear after the death of the former slaves. Furthermore, sometimes slaves decided to diminish the practical value of this norm by selling or donating a part of their estate late in their life, or making a testation.

Nevertheless, I argue that it is not enough to take only legal norms into account when discussing the asymmetric dependency and patron-client relationship. Norms are important, but influence and power often stretch themselves beyond law and regulations. It may exist in reality, even if we do not find it recorded on paper. Anyhow, the dependence is more likely when after the manumission the slave remains under the command of his former master in a formal military network, or when he lends him money and helps him in some way. Such situations were

recorded in Ottoman Sarajevo. On the other hand, in the archival material, I have also encountered a case when a slave owner got into a dispute with his former slave, and could not have legally stopped the freedmen's decision not to obey a former agreement they had. This speaks volumes of the freedmen's agency, as we may see him as a subject that has his desires, policies, interests, and acts to protect all this, even if it is against the wishes and interests of his former owner.

After seeing all these examples from the primary sources, the conclusion arises that when speaking about the lives of freedmen and freedwomen in Ottoman Sarajevo, one should take into account the interplay between agency and social structure. The cases that are collected and analysed in this paper illustrate this claim. However, there are possibilities for further research. The primary sources contain valuable information on the lives of freed slaves, so other variations of their agency in Sarajevo, in the rest of Bosnia, as well as in other parts of the Ottoman Empire could be found and identified. By doing so, we would get a step further to re-examine the existing historiographic images and better understand the social history of the Ottoman Empire, and not just the biographies of freed slaves.

Coping with Life's Challenges in Ottoman Sarajevo: Freed Slaves and Agency in an Early Modern Borderland Society

Abstract ■ This paper aims to fill in the gaps in the social history of the Ottoman borderlands by exploring the social integration and agency of freed slaves in Early Modern Ottoman Sarajevo. Recent scholarship has made considerable advances in evaluating the agency of freed slaves in the Ottoman Empire by using the collective biography approach. However, with few exceptions, attention has mostly been paid to materials relating to the inner parts of the Ottoman world, particularly to the Sharia court protocols of the Istanbul Region. The author argues that if we are to come a step closer to writing a social history of the Ottoman borderlands, as well as to the prosopography of freed slaves in the Ottoman Empire, archival materials from various regions should be taken into account. To achieve the above-said goals, this paper focuses on analysing the information on freed slaves found in the records of the Sharia court in Sarajevo, as well as in the cadastral surveys and endowment deeds. Using such sources, the author shows the interplay between social structure and agency in the examples related to the freedmen and freedwomen.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Bosnia, Slavery, Manumission, Freedmen, Borderland Society, Social History.

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