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鄂圖曼蘇丹穆拉德三世統治時期亞塞拜然的行政管理：軍事政治與宗教基金政策

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摘要

本研究探討鄂圖曼蘇丹穆拉德三世在位期間（1574–1595）亞塞拜然地區的鄂圖曼行政管理，特別著重於1578至1590年鄂圖曼與薩法維戰爭後的軍事政治組織及宗教基金（waqf）政策。研究旨在分析鄂圖曼帝國如何結合軍事治理、地方行政與宗教機構，在其佔領的亞塞拜然領土上建立並鞏固統治權威。

本研究採用比較歷史研究方法，對鄂圖曼檔案資料進行批判性分析，包括《重要事務登記簿》（Mühimme Defterleri）、《土地與賦稅登記簿》（Tahrir Defterleri）、宗教基金紀錄、蘇丹敕令及同時代編年史，並參照相關研究文獻。研究考察貝勒貝伊轄區（beylerbeylik）與桑賈克行政區（sanjak）的設置、地方總督與軍事官員的任命、蒂馬爾制度（timar）的實施，以及宗教基金機構在強化鄂圖曼政治正當性與行政穩定性方面所發揮的作用。

研究結果顯示，鄂圖曼行政當局不僅試圖確保對亞塞拜然的軍事控制，也透過行政重組與宗教基金網絡的擴展，使其統治權威制度化。清真寺、伊斯蘭宗教學校、慈善基金及其他宗教基金機構，成為推動鄂圖曼治理、促進社會整合，以及在原屬薩法維勢力範圍的地區傳播遜尼派哈乃斐學派法律與宗教傳統的重要工具。然而，持續的軍事衝突與地方抵抗，也限制了鄂圖曼統治在該地區的持久性。

本研究整合考察軍事政策、地方行政與宗教基金機構之間的互動，闡明其如何共同形塑16世紀末亞塞拜然的鄂圖曼治理，並為鄂圖曼與薩法維關係史研究提供新的綜合性分析。

****關鍵詞：** **鄂圖曼帝國；蘇丹穆拉德三世；亞塞拜然；鄂圖曼與薩法維戰爭；地方行政；宗教基金機構；軍事政治政策。

OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION IN AZERBAIJAN DURING THE PERIOD OF OTTOMAN SULTAN MURAD III: MILITARY-POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS- ENDOWMENT POLICY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Ottoman administration in Azerbaijan during the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574–1595), with particular emphasis on its military-political organization and religious-endowment (waqf) policy following the Ottoman-Safavid War of 1578–1590. The research aims to analyze the mechanisms through which the Ottoman Empire established and consolidated its authority over the occupied Azerbaijani territories by integrating military governance, provincial administration, and religious institutions.

The study is based on a comparative historical methodology, employing critical analysis of Ottoman archival materials, including *Mühimme Defterleri*, *Tahrir Defterleri*, vakıf records, imperial decrees, and contemporary chronicles, together with relevant secondary literature. The research examines the establishment of beylerbeyliks and sanjaks, the appointment of provincial governors and military officials, the implementation of the timar system, and the role of waqf institutions in reinforcing Ottoman political legitimacy and administrative stability.

The findings demonstrate that the Ottoman administration sought not only to secure military control over Azerbaijan but also to institutionalize its authority through administrative restructuring and the expansion of religious-endowment networks. Mosques, madrasas, charitable foundations, and other waqf institutions functioned as essential instruments for promoting Ottoman governance, facilitating social integration, and supporting the spread of the Hanafi-Sunni legal and religious tradition within a predominantly Safavid sphere. At the same time, continuous military confrontations and local resistance limited the permanence of Ottoman rule in the region.

The study contributes to the historiography of Ottoman-Safavid relations by providing an integrated assessment of the interaction between military policy, provincial administration, and religious-endowment institutions in shaping Ottoman governance in late sixteenth-century Azerbaijan.

KEYWORDS: Ottoman Empire; Sultan Murad III; Azerbaijan; Ottoman–Safavid War; Provincial Administration; Waqf Institutions; Military-Political Policy.

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INTRODUCTION

The second half of the sixteenth century marked one of the most decisive periods in the struggle for political and military supremacy in the Middle East. During this era, the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid state competed not only for territorial control but also for strategic trade routes, frontier fortresses, and ideological influence throughout the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan. Owing to its strategic geographical position between Anatolia, Iran, and the Caspian basin, Azerbaijan occupied a central place in the Ottoman–Safavid rivalry and became the principal theatre of prolonged military campaigns.

Following the accession of Sultan Murad III (1574–1595), the Ottoman Empire adopted a more active eastern policy, culminating in the Ottoman–Safavid War of 1578–1590. The Ottoman victories during this conflict enabled the empire to establish its authority over extensive territories in Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus. However, the consolidation of Ottoman rule depended not solely on military conquest. The administration sought to transform the occupied territories into a stable provincial system through the establishment of administrative institutions, the deployment of military garrisons, the implementation of fiscal and judicial mechanisms, and the development of religious and charitable foundations (*waqfs*) that reinforced both imperial authority and Sunni Islamic identity.

The Ottoman administration in Azerbaijan under Murad III therefore represented a multidimensional process that combined military security, provincial governance, economic organization, and religious policy. The creation of new *eyalets* and *sanjaks*, the appointment of governors and military officials, the restoration and construction of mosques, madrasas, and public institutions, and the allocation of endowment revenues formed essential components of Ottoman state-building in the region. These measures aimed not only to secure newly conquered territories but also to integrate them into the administrative and ideological framework of the Ottoman Empire.

Although the Ottoman–Safavid wars have received considerable scholarly attention, the administrative structure established by the Ottomans in Azerbaijan during Murad III's reign, particularly the relationship

between military governance and religious-endowment policy, has been examined less comprehensively. Most previous studies have concentrated on military campaigns or diplomatic developments, while the institutional mechanisms through which Ottoman authority was consolidated at the provincial level remain comparatively underexplored.

This article examines the Ottoman administration in Azerbaijan during the reign of Sultan Murad III by analysing the interaction between military-political governance and religious-endowment policy. Drawing upon Ottoman archival documents, *tahrir* registers, *vakfiye* records, and contemporary chronicles, together with the relevant historiography, the study investigates how the Ottoman Empire organized provincial administration, maintained military control, and employed religious institutions as instruments of political integration. By exploring these interconnected dimensions, the article contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Ottoman imperial governance in Azerbaijan during one of the most significant phases of Ottoman–Safavid rivalry.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative historical research methodology based on the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources. The research relies on a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to examine the Ottoman administration in Azerbaijan during the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574–1595), with particular attention to military-political governance and religious-endowment (*waqf*) policy.

The principal primary sources include Ottoman archival documents, imperial decrees (*firman*s), cadastral surveys (*tahrir* registers), *waqf* records, and contemporary Ottoman and Safavid chronicles. These materials are analyzed through the principles of source criticism, including external and internal evaluation of authenticity, authorship, chronology, and historical reliability. In addition, published documentary collections and relevant archival materials are used to reconstruct the administrative, military, and religious structures established by the Ottoman government in the occupied Azerbaijani territories.

The study applies the historical-comparative method to compare Ottoman administrative practices in

Azerbaijan with those implemented in other frontier provinces of the empire. The historical-descriptive method is employed to reconstruct the political and military developments of the Ottoman–Safavid conflict and the establishment of Ottoman provincial administration. Furthermore, the historical-analytical method is used to evaluate the relationship between military occupation, provincial governance, fiscal organization, and the institutional role of waqfs in consolidating Ottoman authority.

Particular emphasis is placed on examining the interaction between military administration and religious institutions. The research analyzes how waqf foundations functioned not only as charitable and religious organizations but also as instruments of state integration, urban development, and the legitimization of Ottoman sovereignty in newly conquered territories.

By integrating archival evidence with modern historiography, this methodological framework enables a comprehensive assessment of the Ottoman Empire's military-political and religious-endowment policies in Azerbaijan during the reign of Sultan Murad III and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Ottoman frontier administration in the South Caucasus.

OTTOMAN EASTERN POLICY DURING THE REIGN OF SULTAN MURAD III

Murad III, who ascended the Ottoman throne in 1574 after the death of Selim II, came to power in a complex international political environment. In the second half of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire operated in a long-term geopolitical competition with the Habsburgs in the European direction and the Safavid state on its eastern borders. Although one of the main tasks of state policy in the first years of Murad III's reign was to maintain the military-political superiority of the empire on both fronts, over time the Eastern direction became a priority area of Ottoman foreign policy (İnalçık, *econ II* c 2006, pp. 578–582; Finkel, 2005).

The coming to power of Sultan Murad III was accompanied by the preservation of a certain continuity in the Ottoman state apparatus. Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who had great influence in the state administration, tried to continue the cautious and realistic foreign policy course as in previous years. He was in favor of preserving the

existing peace with the Qizilbaş, considering that a long-term Ottoman–Safavid war could weaken the financial and military resources of the empire. According to Sokollu, starting a new eastern war against the backdrop of ongoing political processes on the Mediterranean and European fronts was not entirely in line with the strategic interests of the Ottoman state (Uzunçarşılı, 1988; Emecen, 2015, 114–115).

However, the internal political crisis that occurred in the Safavid state in the second half of the 16th century had a significant impact on the position of the Ottoman government. The struggle for the throne after the death of Shah Tahmasp I (1524–1576), the short reign of Shah Ismail II (1577–1578), and the political instability that arose after his death weakened the central authority of the Safavid state. The growing conflicts between the Qizilbash tribes weakened the military power of the country and created favorable conditions for the Ottoman Empire in the border regions. In the Ottoman court, this situation began to be viewed as a historic opportunity to march on the Safavids (Roemer, 1986; Newman, 2006, p. 43–44).

Not only the internal crisis in the Safavid state, but also the strategic position of Azerbaijan played an important role in the formation of Sultan Murad III's Eastern policy. Azerbaijan was considered the center of the Ottoman Empire's Caucasian policy. Regions such as Tabriz, Shirvan, Karabakh, Ganja and Nakhchivan formed an important military-political, economic-commercial connection line between Anatolia and the South Caucasus, the Caspian Basin and Central Asia. Control over these territories ensured the security of trade routes and facilitated the military operations of the Ottoman army in the Caucasus, Iran and Central Asia. That is why Azerbaijan became one of the main geopolitical pillars of the Ottoman Eastern strategy during the reign of Sultan Murad III (İnalçık, 1973; Faroghi, 2006, pp. 132–133).

The position of the pro-war political circles within the palace was further strengthened after the assassination of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in 1579. His death is considered an important turning point in Ottoman foreign policy. The balanced diplomatic line pursued by Sokollu gave way to a more active expansionist policy. New statesmen, especially Lele Mustafa Pasha and Sinan Pasha, advocated the launch

of large-scale military operations in the east, taking advantage of the weakness of the Safavid state. During this period, the dominant view among the Ottoman political elite was that victory over the Safavids would increase the empire's international prestige, allow for full control of the Caucasus, and exploit the economic potential of Azerbaijan (Emecen, 2015, pp. 114-115).

The ideological foundations of Sultan Murad III's Eastern policy were also noteworthy. The Ottoman sultans considered themselves the main protectors of the Sunni Islamic world, while they viewed the Shiite ideology of the Safavids as a political and religious threat. For this reason, the war waged during the reign of Sultan Murad III was not only aimed at territorial expansion; it was also presented as a means of protecting Sunni rule and strengthening the religious authority of the Ottoman caliph. The religious justification of the Iranian campaign in official chronicles and decrees clearly demonstrates the ideological nature of this policy (Fleischer, 1986; Imber, 2002).

Preparations for the Ottoman-Safavid war, which began in 1578, were carried out in parallel in military, administrative and diplomatic directions. The mobilization of troops in Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia, the creation of food and ammunition reserves, the restoration of roads and bridges, and the strengthening of border fortresses indicated that the war was being prepared in a planned manner. In addition, the Ottoman government tried to keep the Safavid state under pressure from various directions by strengthening diplomatic relations with the Crimean Khanate, the rulers of the North Caucasus, and some Georgian principalities. These preparatory measures show that Murad III's Eastern policy was not the result of a spontaneous decision, but the product of long-term geopolitical planning (Agoston, 2005; Murphey, 1999).

One of the important components of Sultan Murad III's Eastern policy was to strengthen diplomatic relations with the Central Asian khanates in order to create a regional counter-organization against the Safavid state. In this context, the Sheybanid state, which was preparing for war against the Safavids, maintained active diplomatic relations with the Ottoman court, in addition to the Great Mongol Empire. In the letter addressed to Sultan Murad III by

the ruler of Balkh, Abdulmomin Khan, the special mention of the sending of Akbar Shah's envoy Hakim Himam to Bukhara for the purpose of cooperation attracts attention as one of the practical manifestations of this policy [Agayev, pp. 119-120]. The Ottoman court, interested in opening a second front against its rival in the ongoing war with the Safavids, welcomed the Bukhara envoys with high respect and provided them with broad support. Thus, the main factors influencing the formation of Murad III's Eastern policy were the political crisis that arose in the Safavid state, the political changes that occurred in the Ottoman leadership after the death of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, the geostrategic position of Azerbaijan, and the empire's desire to expand control over the Caucasus. It was as a result of the interaction of these factors that the Ottoman-Safavid war of 1578–1590 began and Azerbaijan became the main target of Murad III's Eastern strategy. However, it should be specially noted that during the period of preparation for the war, the financial system of the Ottoman Empire suffered great damage. The wars with the Safavids, which began in 1578 and continued intermittently until 1639, are considered one of the main reasons for the decline of the Ottoman Empire (İnalçık, pp. 58-59). The occupation and conquest of Azerbaijan and Shirvan in 1578–1590 had devastating consequences not only in terms of the Turkish military structure, but also in terms of Ottoman finances.

ESTABLISHMENT OF OTTOMAN RULE IN AZERBAIJAN

Although the Treaty of Istanbul (Farhad Pasha) of 1590 was one of the most important diplomatic achievements of the Ottoman Empire's Eastern policy, this success was not only a legal confirmation of military victory. After the treaty, the Ottoman authorities tried to create a solid administrative system in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Ottoman administrative model began to be applied in the regions of Tabriz, Shirvan, Ganja, Karabakh, Nakhchivan and Chukhursad, new beylerbeyliks were formed, military garrisons were deployed and detailed tax registers were compiled to determine the tax obligations of the population. By introducing the timar system in the region, the Ottoman authorities tried to ensure both the maintenance of military forces and to bring local economic resources under state control (İnalçık, 1973; Barkan, 1943). The rapid organization of

Ottoman administrative institutions, especially in the western and northwestern regions of Azerbaijan, indicated the empire's intention to govern these territories not as a temporary military occupation zone, but as an integral part of the state. Ottoman officials were active in important cities such as Tabriz and Shamakhi, fortresses were restored, roads were secured, and new administrative mechanisms were created to collect state revenues. At the same time, the strengthening of Sunni religious institutions and the support of mosques and foundations aimed to strengthen the political legitimacy of Ottoman rule on a religious level (Kütükoğlu, 1993, pp. 119–145; Faroghi, 2006, pp. 132–133; Emecen, 2015, pp. 114–115). However, the consolidation of Ottoman rule in Azerbaijan was accompanied by serious difficulties. The economic weakening of the region as a result of long-term wars, the decline in agricultural production, the exodus of part of the population, and the disruption of trade routes reduced the effectiveness of Ottoman administrative policy. On the other hand, a significant part of the local Qizilbash tribes did not accept Ottoman rule and maintained their loyalty to the Safavids. This situation increased the Ottoman army's need to maintain a permanent military force in the region, creating an additional financial burden on the state treasury (Efendiyev, 2007, pp. 235–240; Murphey, 1999; Agoston, 2005).

Although the signing of the Treaty of Istanbul was a severe political defeat for the Safavid state, it did not mean the complete collapse of the state. After Shah Abbas I came to power in 1587, large-scale political and military reforms were initiated in the Safavid court. Shah Abbas first of all tried to eliminate internal tribal conflicts, strengthen central authority and create a new regular army. He used the peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire as a means of buying time and reshaping the military potential of the state. Therefore, many researchers evaluate the Treaty of Istanbul as a strategic retreat of the Safavids. The treaty gave Shah Abbas the opportunity to restore internal stability and make the necessary preparations for a future counterattack (Savory, 1980, pp. 76–79; Newman, 2006, pp. 43–44). In fact, the political situation created by the 1590 treaty did not last long. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire faced new wars on the European front and the internal Jalali rebellions weakened the military superiority of the state on its eastern borders. Taking

advantage of this, Shah Abbas I launched large-scale military operations to regain the lost Azerbaijani lands from 1603. Within a short period of time, Tabriz, Nakhchivan, Iravan, Ganja, Karabakh and other important strategic centers came under Safavid control again. Thus, the territorial division established by the Treaty of Istanbul lasted only thirteen years, and the greatest territorial success of the Ottoman Empire in the East was not long-lived (Inalcik, 1973; Roemer, 1986).

However, the significance of the Istanbul Treaty in the political history of Azerbaijan is not limited to the period during which it was in force. The Treaty once again demonstrated the geopolitical role that Azerbaijan played in the system of international relations at the end of the 16th century. In the rivalry between the Ottoman and Safavid empires, Azerbaijan was a strategic fulcrum for both states, the key to control over the Caucasus, and an important place connecting the East-West trade routes. That is why the Istanbul Treaty should be considered not just a document defining the border division between the two empires, but an important geopolitical act that influenced the future political development of the South Caucasus. Its consequences had a long-term impact on subsequent Ottoman-Safavid relations, the administrative structure of the region, and the development directions of the political history of Azerbaijan.

ESTABLISHMENT OF OTTOMAN ADMINISTRATION IN AZERBAIJAN

The Safavid-Ottoman wars of 1578-1590 led to important changes in the political map of the Middle East at the end of the 16th century. This long-term military conflict, which began during the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574-1595), created conditions for the territorial expansion of the Ottoman state in the direction of the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan. In the course of the war, the Ottoman armies captured Tiflis, Shamakhi, Baku, Ganja, Tabriz and other important strategic centers and took the major part of Azerbaijan under their control. In particular, the transfer of the territory of Shirvan province under Ottoman rule resulted in the formation of a new administrative-management system in the region. The Ottoman authorities applied sanjag and beylerbey administration here, and editorial books were

compiled for the purpose of registering the population and land fund.

The war ended with the peace treaty of Istanbul (Farhad Pasha) signed on March 21, 1590. According to this agreement, the Safavid state was forced to recognize the authority of the Ottomans over the lands of Azerbaijan, Shirvan, Karabakh, Tabriz, Chukhursad, most of Georgia and Luristan, which were occupied by the Ottomans as a result of the war. With this, the Ottoman Empire reached the widest eastern borders in its history, and the Safavid state faced serious territorial losses. The agreement was important not only in terms of its military and political consequences, but also from a legal point of view, and it ensured the legitimization of the Ottoman rule in the territories of Azerbaijan. For this reason, the Treaty of Istanbul is considered an important turning point in terms of studying the changes that took place in the political, administrative and socio-economic life of Azerbaijan at the end of the 16th century (Kütukoğlu, 1993, pp. 119–145; Efendiyev, 2007, pp. 235–240; Savory, 1980, pp. 76–79).

The institutional experience of the Ottoman Empire in the field of endowment management, which had been formed over the centuries, was also reflected in the occupied Azerbaijani lands. For this reason, special importance was attached to the protection of the endowment property of mosques, madrasas and shrines operating in the region, the use of endowment income for their intended purpose, and the continuation of the activity of the institution of mutual assistance. Since the protection of the economic foundations of religious institutions within the framework of the classical endowment system of the Ottoman state was one of the important directions of state policy, the endowment property of shrines such as Bibi Heybat and Abu Said Abdal Bakuyi in the Shirvan region was also protected, and their previous rights were confirmed by the new authorities. The decrees issued by Sultan Murad III in 1591 show that the new authorities recognized the endowment rights remaining from previous periods and created conditions for the continuation of the activities of the endowment property of shrines such as Bibi Heybat and Abu Said Abdal Bakuyi. This policy served the Ottoman state's goal of ensuring social stability in the occupied territories and gaining the support of local religious institutions.

The collection of "Medieval Documents on the History of Baku" published by T. Musavi in 1967 has formed an important source base for studying the religious and property history of Baku and Absheron. Of the 23 documents included in the collection, 19 are directly related to the endowment property, its management and the institution of the trustee. Of these documents, 12 belong to the endowment management of the Bibi-Heybat shrine. These materials include the decrees of Shah Tahmasib I dated 1547 and 1555, the decree of Sultan Murad III dated 1591, the decree of Shah Abbas I dated 1607, the documents of Shah Abbas II dated 1650, 1654 and 1656, the decision of the Sadarat Divan dated 1654, two decrees of Shah Suleiman dated 1667, the document of Ahmed Khan of Guba dated 1790 and the decree dated 1845 (Musavi: 1965). These documents, which reflect a very wide period in chronological terms, allow the formation, protection and management mechanisms of the endowment property of the Bibi-Heybat mausoleum to be sequentially traced from the Safavid era to the mid-19th century. This feature makes them particularly important in terms of studying the socio-economic foundations and legal status of the shrine.

The other 7 documents included in Musavi's publication are related to the endowment property of the Abu Said Abdal Bakuyi mausoleum. This group includes the decree of Sultan Murad III dated 1591, the document of Shah Abbas I dated 1607, the decrees of the Sadarat Divan dated 1607, 1655 and 1699, the decree of Shah Abbas II dated 1656 and the decree of Shah Hussein dated 1699 (Musavi: 1967). Through these documents, it is possible to trace not only individual endowment donations, but also the evolution of the mausoleum's economic support system, administrative control over it and legal confirmation mechanisms at various stages of power. Thus, the materials on both the Bibi-Heybat and Abu Said Abdal Bakuyi shrines act as one of the main written sources that allow us to reconstruct the long-term development trajectory of the material base of religious centers and endowment relations on the Absheron Peninsula.

One of the important studies in this field is the research of S. Ashurbeyli. The author extensively analyzed the history of the Bibiheybat and Abu Said Abdal Bakuyi mausoleums, as well as the endowment documents compiled in connection with these shrines

in the 15th–17th centuries. In particular, the study of endowment documents dating back to the periods of Farrukh Yasar, Sultan Murad III and Shah Abbas I is important in terms of determining the legal and economic foundations of those religious complexes (Ashurbayli: 2006). One of the noteworthy aspects of Ashurbeyli's research is the comparative analysis of the institutions of endowment and hereditary land ownership that existed in Azerbaijan (Ashurbayli: 2006). In addition to showing the different functional characteristics of these two institutions, he also highlighted their certain similarities in terms of legal status, hereditary character and property relations. This approach creates a methodological basis for assessing the religious-land ownership system in medieval Azerbaijan in a broader context.

Information about Abu Said Abdal Bakuvi has been preserved in Azerbaijani historiography mainly in the works of A.A. Bakikhanov. According to the author, despite the poor material life of the sheikh, he had high spiritual authority, fame as a person of virtue and wide public sympathy. Bakikhanov emphasizes that he was a generous and popular Sufi sheikh. It is clear from the author's notes that, based on the decrees of the ruler, the income from oil wells and agricultural fields in Shubany was allocated for the maintenance of the sheikh's tomb and the payment of expenses for the shrine (Bakikhanov: 2001). This information indicates that the mausoleum of Abu Said Abdal Bakuy was not only a place of religious and spiritual pilgrimage, but also functioned as a waqf complex with certain economic supports.

It is known from the sources that the income of this endowment was directed to meet the needs of pilgrims visiting the tomb, to maintain the shrine and to ensure its service system. However, as a result of the political turmoil and changes of power that occurred in the following periods, this endowment economy declined, and the material foundations of the shrine began to weaken. According to the information provided by Bakikhanov, the tomb was restored in 1817 by the residents of Baku, Haji Gasim bey and Mansurkhan bey, which is one of the important facts indicating that the shrine retained its religious authority among the local population (Bakikhanov: 2001).

One of the main directions of the research is to investigate the state of the endowments existing in

Azerbaijan during the Ottoman rule and the impact of the decisions made at that time on the subsequent historical development processes. In this regard, the decree of Sultan Murad III regarding the Bibi-Heybat mausoleum is of particular importance. The fact that the decree presented to the mausoleum's caretaker, Sharafeddin Ali, in 1591, instructed him to "determine salaries from the endowments of Emir Khalilullah" clearly demonstrates that the shrine's servants were provided with endowment income (Musavi: 1967). At the same time, this statement gives reason to assume that the endowment base of the Bibi-Heybat complex dates back to earlier times, specifically to the reign of Shirvanshah Khalilullah I. Thus, the document reflects not only Ottoman administrative intervention, but also legal recognition of the endowment tradition inherited from earlier periods.

However, the decree in question does not provide information about the specific composition of the endowment property. For this reason, it is not possible to determine with complete accuracy the amount and when the land, villages and other sources of income belonging to the Bibiheybat shrine were endowed. In particular, the question of when and by which ruler the village of Zigh was endowed with the shrine remains open. Based on the available information, it can be assumed that this donation took place either during the reign of Shirvanshah I Khalilullah or at an earlier stage, under Kazan Khan. Both possibilities indicate that the roots of the history of the endowment of Bibiheybat are connected with the political and cultural environment before the Safavids.

The decrees of the Safavid ruler Tahmasib I from 1547 and 1555 are among the important documents confirming that the Bibiheybat complex had a stable endowment property since the 15th century. These decrees show that the economic base of the shrine was not built on random donations, but on a system of endowments legally recognized and protected by the state authorities. In general, the research materials prove that the rulers who came to power in Azerbaijan, as a rule, reaffirmed the decrees issued in previous periods regarding endowments, restored or renewed their legal force. This practice served to continuously protect the legitimacy of endowment property. At the same time, sources show that despite the changes in rulers, there was no

fundamental transformation in the endowment status of the Bibiheybat shrine and its management principles, but rather the confirmation and continuation of the existing legal tradition was observed.

As we have seen, the 15th century endowment certificates or other official documents of the shrines located in the geographical area covered by the Shirvanshahs have survived in limited numbers, therefore, it is almost impossible to obtain information about the endowment properties of this period. It is possible to form a certain idea about the endowment properties of the Bibi Heybat and Abu Said shrines based on official documents issued in later centuries.

In the medieval Islamic world, cleaners played an important role in the daily activities of shrines, mausoleums, and mosques (Musavi: 1967). They were not only responsible for the cleanliness and tidiness of religious places; they also participated in the practical work of receiving and accommodating visitors, creating the necessary conditions, and sometimes organizing religious ceremonies. In this regard, the job of cleaner was considered an integral part of the shrine economy and one of the main service areas that ensured the daily functionality of the endowment system. The decree issued by the Ottoman Sultan Murad III regarding the Bibi-Heybat mausoleum confirms this. According to that document, the mausoleum cleaner, Sharafeddin Ali, was paid a daily salary of four akhs from the surplus income of the endowment (Musavi: 1967). This fact shows that even during the Ottoman rule, the financing of the internal service system of Shiite shrines continued to be carried out through endowment income, and attention was paid to preserving the activity of the shrine.

This document also shows that the Ottoman authorities, despite religious and sectarian differences, took a pragmatic and relatively protective position in relation to the economic foundations of local holy places. The issuance of new decrees regarding the Bibiheybat waqf after the Azerbaijani lands returned to Safavid rule demonstrates the continuation of this legal tradition. In particular, the decree of Shah Abbas I dated 1607 is more detailed than previous documents. The decree listed the waqf property of the shrine not only in general terms, but also by specific sources of income. This included, in addition to the

property of the village of Zyk, the tithes of three nearby oil wells, the shepherd and livestock taxes collected from the 1,500 sheep belonging to the dervishes of the mausoleum and the subjects of the village of Zyk, as well as the tithes collected from the cotton and grain fields cultivated by the dervishes in the Duldara area (Musavi: 1967). Thus, the decree indicates that the economic base of the sanctuary is not limited to land ownership alone, but includes income from both agriculture and oil production.

One of the important features of Shah Abbas I's decree of 1607 is that it specifically mentions that some types of taxes were given to the shrine in the form of soyugal (Musavi: 1967). This indicates that the interaction between the institutions of waqf and soyugal also existed in practice during the Safavid period. As is known, soyugal traditionally meant the right to privileged land, taxes and income granted by the state to certain individuals or religious institutions. This right was often accompanied by administrative and fiscal concessions. The fact that some income was granted to the shrine as soyugal in Shah Abbas I's decree shows that the economic foundations of the waqf institution were sometimes strengthened through the soyugal mechanism, along with classical waqf donations. Researchers of medieval Azerbaijani history I.P. Petrushevsky and S. Ashurbeyli also noted that waqf property belonging to religious institutions was sometimes granted on the basis of the right of soyugal (Musavi: 1967). In this regard, the Bibiheybat materials clearly demonstrate that the financial support of religious institutions in the Safavid state was strengthened not only by legal, but also by administrative-fiscal means.

Another important shrine with endowment property in the territory of the Shirvan beylerbeyli was the mausoleum of Abu Said Abulkhair, located near Baku. The collection of documents published by T. Musavi includes seven documents related to this shrine, four of which are royal decrees and three are decrees of the Sadarat Divan (Musavi: 1967). Among these documents, one of the sources of particular interest is the decree issued by the Ottoman Sultan Murad III in April 1591. It is clear from the content of the document that Ramazan Pasha Shibani, who was appointed minister of the Baku port, stated that the arable land named Abu Said Abulkhair mausoleum was the endowment of the mausoleum, that the income from this land had previously been spent on

the needs of the shrine, and that he had requested instructions from the central authorities on how these incomes should be spent in the future. This fact, on the one hand, shows that the endowment base of the mausoleum was based on specific agricultural incomes, and on the other hand, the Ottoman administration tried to keep local religious institutions under administrative control without directly interfering in their financial matters.

The analysis of the decree also necessitates the revision of some historiographical interpretations. While commenting on this document, T. Musavi noted that Murad III gave instructions to Hasan Pasha, the vizier of Shirvan, regarding the appropriation of the income of the said foundation property (Musavi: 1967). However, if you look carefully at the text of the decree, it can be seen that it is not about the embezzlement of the endowment revenues by Hasan Pasha, but on the contrary, it is about ensuring that those revenues are spent in accordance with the purpose and benefit of the shrine under his control (Musavi: 1967). In other words, the content of the document brings to the fore the issue of administrative control and the use of waqf income according to its purpose. This difference is significant because it indicates the existence of a policy of protecting the financial support of the shrine under state control, rather than the looting of waqf revenues during the Ottoman period.

Another issue that attracts attention in the sources is the use of the term "minister". Although this term is sometimes used directly in the meaning of waqf administrator in some materials of the early Islamic period, in the following centuries it is more often used as an administrative person who exercises control over waqf lands and incomes and is responsible for their management. From this point of view, Ramazan Pasha's participation in the mentioned document can be evaluated not only as a matter of local administration, but also as an example of management of foundation property within the framework of state control.

In the background of Ottoman-Safavid relations, one of the interesting facts showing that the practice of religious endowment is not limited to the territory of Azerbaijan is related to the fact that Sultan Murad III donated the Holy Quran to the Sheikh Safi library in Ardabil in 1594-1595 (Erdebil-Safevi-Degahi: 2023). This case shows that there is a more complex

approach of the Ottoman political power towards the sacred places of Safavid origin, which cannot be explained by purely sectarian conflict. On the other hand, the data of Tahrir No. 896 reveal that the number of waqf villages belonging to the shrine of Sheikh Safi increased significantly in Ardabil district compared to the end of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century. In the tahrir notebook dated 1726, there is some information about the sanctuaries of Pir Huseyn, Sheikh Nuruddin and Badraddin, located around Ardabil, as well as the endowments of the tomb of Sheikh Bayazid. These materials show that despite the political competition of the Safavid and Ottoman authorities, the foundation system of holy shrines in the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan geography continued to function as an important component of both regional religious life and state-religion relations.

The "Detailed Notebook of the Nakhchivan Sanjak" from 1727 is one of the important sources for studying the economic foundations of religious institutions operating in the Nakhchivan region during the Ottoman rule (Detailed notebook of the Nakhchivan sanjak: 2001). The notebook provides valuable information about the endowments of the Sultan Murad, Hazratpasha and Khachaparag communities located in the Nakhchivan, Alinja and Azadjiran regions, as well as the large mosque and Mirza Ibrahim madrasah in the city of Ordubad. In particular, the detailed presentation of the sources of income of these religious institutions allows us to form a clear idea of the financial structure, management mechanism and expenditure directions of the endowment economy in the first quarter of the 18th century.

It can be seen from the information in the source that the endowment income of the Sultan Murad, Hazratpasha and Khachaparag communities operating in the Nakhchivan Sanjak was mainly provided at the expense of market shops, mills and various sources of rent. Among these revenues, the daily income from state-owned shops in Khatib Bazaar, income from commercial places such as Tajbeyim Şeytanbazar, Envedin Çanaq and Tünek Bazaars, Meydan Bazaar, rent from endowment shops located around Hazratpaşa and Sultan Murad communities, share from Kalbali Bey's mill, as well as amounts from market shops and market rents

belonging to individual individuals played an important role. The total calculation of all these sources of income shows that the annual endowment income of the three communities mentioned was approximately 60,517 akhs (Detailed notebook of the Nakhchivan sanjak: 2001).

The sources also clearly indicate the directions of expenditure of these funds. The main part of the endowment income was directed to the salaries of the service personnel who ensured the daily activities of religious institutions. In the Sultan Murad community, a separate daily salary was determined for the imam and preacher, the muezzin, the cleaner, the doorman, the persons responsible for the tavliyyat work, those who performed the janabah work and those who carried out the writing work. The same practice is observed in the Hazratpaşa and Khachaparag communities. Calculations show that 49,275 akhs of the annual income of the three communities of 60,517 akhs were spent directly on paying the salaries of the service personnel, while the remaining 11,242 akhs were directed to current expenses, repair needs and, possibly, charitable activities (Detailed notebook of the Nakhchivan sanjak: 2002). This fact shows that the endowment system during the Ottoman period acted as a functional financial mechanism not only for the maintenance of religious places of worship, but also for ensuring the continuous operation of the administrative and service apparatus of these places.

In the 20s of 18th century, one of the religious institutions with large endowment incomes was the Sultan Murad Khan Mosque located in the Ordubad settlement of the Azadjiran district. According to "Mufasssal Defter", the incomes of this mosque were mainly formed at the expense of the monthly 40 akhs received from each of the 150 shops, 3,500 akhs received from the incomes of the Bazarbashi bathhouse, and the annual incomes of the Agha Mirza caravanserai, which reached 28,000 akhs (Detailed notebook of the Nakhchivan sanjak: 2001). Calculations based on these indicators reveal that the annual endowment income of the Sultan Murad Mosque in Ordubad was 142,000 akhs. This amount indicates an extremely high endowment potential on a regional scale and shows that Ordubad at that time was not only a trade center, but also held an important position in terms of religious and economic aspects.

The distribution of the endowment income of the Ordubad Sultan Murad community is also noteworthy. A certain part of the daily income was allocated to the salaries of the imam, khatib, muezzin, farrash, guardian and mutavalli. According to calculations, 31,025 akhs of the total annual income of 142,000 akhs were spent on paying the salaries of the service personnel, and the rest was used for the repair of the mosque and its related buildings, meeting current needs and, probably, for social and charitable expenses. This picture shows that communities with large endowment farms did not only function as places of worship, but also functioned as complex religious and economic institutions that received income from facilities such as markets, baths and caravansaries as part of the urban economy.

In the 17th century, the city of Sheki was also distinguished as one of the important centers of religious and administrative life. According to Evliya Çelebi, there were already seven Friday mosques in the city (Evliya Çelebi: 1983). Among them, the Mirza Ali Bey mosque located in the bazaar, the Laguşoğlu Ahmed Bey mosque in the fortress, and the mosque built in the name of Murad Khan III were especially famous. At the same time, the traveler also notes that some mosques were partially in a state of ruin. The religious infrastructure of Sheki was closely connected with the general economic and social appearance of the city: there were hotels, baths, a market, and mulberry gardens known for silk production. These observations indicate that the religious places of Sheki did not only have a worship function, but were also one of the central elements of the economic and social life of the city.

However, the fact that most of the endowment documents from the Shirvanshahs' era have not survived to this day does not allow us to fully restore the economic base of the religious institutions of that period. The limited available materials provide a certain idea of the endowment ownership of the Bibi Heybat and Abu Said Abdal Bakuyi shrines. The confirmation of the endowment donated by Shirvanshah I Khalilullah to the Bibiheybat mausoleum in the decree of Sultan Murad III in 1591 indicates that the shrine had a legally recognized endowment base from earlier times. However, since the document does not provide information on the specific composition of this endowment property, it is not possible to determine the full scale of the shrine's sources of

income. Similarly, although the decrees of Shah Tahmasib I dated 1547 and 1555 confirm that the Bibiheybat complex had endowment property since the 15th century, information on the volume, geography, and structure of this property remains incomplete. For this reason, there is a significant difference between the detailed information preserved in the tahrir notebooks for regions such as Nakhchivan and Ordubad and the fragmented documentary materials related to the Shirvan region. While in the first case, specific financial mechanisms and management structures of the endowment economy are visible, in the second case, it is possible to restore the endowment status of the shrines on the basis of decrees of a more legally affirmative nature.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that the Ottoman conquest of Azerbaijan during the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574–1595) represented not merely a military expansion but the establishment of a comprehensive administrative system designed to consolidate imperial authority in the South Caucasus. The Ottoman administration combined military organization, provincial governance, fiscal regulation, and religious-endowment policies to strengthen political control over the newly occupied territories while integrating them into the imperial administrative framework.

The research shows that the Ottoman military-political strategy was based on the rapid occupation of strategically important cities, the establishment of fortified garrisons, and the organization of eyalets and sanjaks according to the classical Ottoman provincial model. The appointment of experienced governors, military commanders, and judicial officials enabled the empire to create an effective mechanism for maintaining order, collecting taxes, and securing communication routes despite the continuing Ottoman-Safavid rivalry.

An important finding of this study is that the Ottoman religious-endowment (waqf) policy constituted an essential component of imperial governance rather than serving exclusively religious purposes. The establishment and restoration of mosques, madrasas, caravanserais, baths, and charitable institutions through waqf foundations facilitated the spread of Ottoman administrative and legal traditions,

strengthened Sunni religious institutions, and promoted the socio-economic integration of the occupied regions. Consequently, waqf institutions functioned simultaneously as religious, social, economic, and political instruments supporting Ottoman state authority.

The study further indicates that the Ottoman administration sought to preserve stability by adapting certain local administrative practices while incorporating regional elites into the provincial governing system whenever political circumstances permitted. This pragmatic approach helped reduce resistance and enhanced the effectiveness of Ottoman rule, although the persistence of military conflict with the Safavid state limited the durability of many administrative reforms.

Overall, the findings suggest that Ottoman policy in Azerbaijan under Murad III should be understood as a multidimensional state-building project in which military conquest, provincial administration, and religious-endowment institutions operated as complementary mechanisms of imperial governance. Although Ottoman control over much of Azerbaijan remained temporary because of the protracted Ottoman-Safavid wars, the administrative practices implemented during this period left a significant historical legacy, illustrating the empire's capacity to adapt its governing institutions to frontier regions and highlighting the strategic importance of Azerbaijan within Ottoman eastern policy during the late sixteenth century.

The results of this research contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Ottoman provincial administration in the South Caucasus and provide a basis for future comparative studies examining the interaction between military administration, religious institutions, and imperial governance in the Ottoman-Safavid frontier.

NOVELTY OF RESEARCH

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of Ottoman rule in Azerbaijan during the reign of Sultan Murad III through the combined analysis of military-political administration and religious-endowment (waqf) policy. Unlike previous studies, which have generally focused either on the military dimension of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict or on the broader political

history of the region, this research investigates the interaction between provincial governance, military organization, and waqf institutions as complementary instruments of Ottoman state-building.

The study offers a systematic assessment of the administrative restructuring implemented in the occupied Azerbaijani territories following the Ottoman conquests of 1578–1590, including the establishment of provincial units, the appointment of governors, and the application of the timar system. It further demonstrates how waqf institutions functioned not only as religious and charitable organizations but also as mechanisms for consolidating Ottoman authority, strengthening administrative legitimacy, and integrating the local population into the imperial system.

By synthesizing evidence from Ottoman archival documents, tahrir registers, imperial decrees, waqf records, and contemporary chronicles, the research provides a more integrated interpretation of Ottoman governance in late sixteenth-century Azerbaijan. Consequently, the study contributes new perspectives to the historiography of Ottoman–Safavid relations and enhances the understanding of the relationship

between military conquest, provincial administration, and institutional governance in the Ottoman Empire.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted independently, and the interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this study are based solely on the examination of historical sources and relevant scholarly literature. No financial, institutional, or personal relationships influenced the design, conduct, or reporting of this research.

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Ethics Statement · 研究倫理聲明

This historical study uses documentary sources and published literature and involves no human participants or animals.

本歷史研究使用文獻史料與已出版資料，不涉及人體研究或動物實驗。

Data Availability · 資料可取得性

The sources supporting this study are identified in the references and footnotes.

本研究所依據的資料來源均列於參考文獻及註腳中。

Ottoman Administration in Azerbaijan during the Period of Ottoman Sultan Murad III: Military-Political and Religious-Endowment Policy

鄂圖曼蘇丹穆拉德三世時期亞塞拜然的鄂圖曼統治：軍事政治與宗教慈善基金政策

Zahra Rustam gizi Islamova; Aysel Akram qızı Garibova; Solmaz Adil qızı Azimova pp. 172–186

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