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# Imperial Genealogies and Ottoman Nobility in Republican Turkey: Reassessing the Distinction Between Public and Private Archives

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## Abstract

As Grand Vizier from 1782 to 1785, Halil Hamid Pasha established a pious foundation (*vakıf*) in 1783. Administered by his descendants, the foundation gave impetus to various forms of family genealogy in the last two centuries. Celal Bükey and his son Erol Bükey administered the foundation (*tevlîyet*) from 1973 to 1981 and from 1992 to 2002 respectively. Using their personal documents, the article studies the way father and son handled the various symbolic materials they had inherited from their predecessors in order to transform an *ancien régime* lineage into a republican dynasty organized through new family memorial references. Underlining the extent to which family archives need to be addressed as a cumulative process of preserving documents as deeds that legally guarantee ownership, the article also reassesses the line usually drawn by scholars between private papers and public archives.

## Keywords

Ottoman nobility – private papers – republican dynasty – waqfs

Over the last decades, Ottoman nobility has contributed to the expansion of the genealogical genre under the Turkish Republican regime through a renewed historical attention to imperial ancestors.<sup>1</sup> No longer restricted to

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1 Bouquet, Olivier, “Comment les grandes familles ottomanes ont découvert la généalogie”, *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, 82 (2011), 297–324.

the seraglio and dynastic politics, the imperial family has been closely associated with the republican past and the centenary of the establishment of the Republic that will be celebrated in 2023. Since the Ottomans are back in the public arena while the Kemalist culture is being deeply reconsidered, Turkish citizens are summoned to redefine their position towards their own past. This paves the way for reassessing a country shaped by an official meritocratic ideology. Memories accumulated through heirlooms during the Ottoman Empire are now perceived within the framework of a combined national and imperial commemoration. An increasing number of them are being published and commented.<sup>2</sup> Among other items, such as photos, visiting cards and family portraits, these publications include genealogical diagrams. However, most of the documentation still needs to be collected from the family themselves. This is what I started to do after I met in 2010 some of the descendants of Halil Hamid Pasha.

As a Grand Vizier between 1782 and 1785, this Ottoman dignitary established a pious foundation (*waqf*, *vakıf*) in 1783. Administered by his successive descendants, the foundation gave impetus to various forms of family genealogy in the last two centuries. Among the pasha's descendants, Celal Bükey and his son Erol Bükey were in charge of the foundation (*tevlîyet*) from 1973 to 1981 and from 1992 to 2002, respectively. Using their personal documents, I have studied the way father and son handled the various symbolic materials they had inherited from their predecessors in order to transform an *ancien régime* lineage into a republican dynasty organized through new family memorial references. Focusing on the same family and sources, I wish to underline the extent to which family archives need to be addressed as a cumulative process of preserving documents as deeds that legally guarantee ownership. I also intend to discuss the line usually drawn by scholars between private papers and public archives. In doing so, I put under scrutiny private documents, including registers (*defter*) and diagrams (*şecere*),<sup>3</sup> used by the two aforementioned administrators (*mütevelli*) in their relations with two separate institutions: the

2 Bardakçı, Murat, *Son Osmanlılar* (Istanbul: Pan, 1991); Osmanoğlu, Osman Selaheddin (ed.), *Ali Vâsib Efendi: Bir Şehzadenin Hâtrâtı. Vatan ve Menfâda Gördüklerim ve İştiklerim* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2004); Döndaş, İnci, and Ali Serim, *Hürrem Sultan'ın Torunları: Osmanlı Hanedanının Kadınları Anlatıyor* (Istanbul: DK, 2013); Senyücel, Kerime (ed.), *Hanedan'ın Sürgün Öyküsü* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2009); Bardakçı, Murat, *Neslişah: Cumhuriyet Devrinde Bir Osmanlı Prensesi* (Istanbul: Everest, 2011).

3 Several descendants of Halil Hamid Pasha have kindly placed fifteen of these *şeceres* at my disposal: the first dates from the end of the nineteenth century, the last from the 1990s. The documents collected from the pasha's descendants are here designated "HHP archives".

Directorate of Pious Foundations (*Vakıf Genel Müdürlüğü*, VGM) in Ankara and the right holders (*evlad*) of the foundation living around Turkey and abroad.

### The Foundation

In 1783–85, Halil Hamid Pasha oversaw the transfer of various estates in mortmain (*evkaf*) including a school, a library, two Sufi convents (*tekke*), a house, a mansion, several ovens and fountains to his pious foundation. The inalienable and permanent legal status of the foundation provided him with three advantages: sustainably establishing beneficial public works favourable to his reputation as a man of faith; avoiding the confiscation of his assets by the sultan with whom, as a slave of the Porte (*kul*), he shared his body and goods; allowing his descendants (*evlad*) to enjoy the benefits of the foundation. According to the foundation deed (*vakfiye*), drawn up in November 1783, the administrator was required to equitably share the benefits with the other right holders. As a consequence, these right holders had to be identified one by one. *Evladiyet* (the condition of being a direct descendant, therefore a right holder) was limited by two prerequisites. First, as observed in many other waqfs, a descendant of Halil Hamid Pasha was entitled (*müstahak*) to apply for heirship only if their direct ascendant in the lineage was dead. Second, when applying, one had to establish one's direct link with the founder. To this end, not only genealogical diagrams were formulated but they also had to be regularly updated.

The foundation deed precisely defined how the waqf would be administered and by whom. The founder ordered that, upon his death, his legal spouse would become administrator. This is exactly what happened: Ayşe Hanım ran the foundation for thirty years (Table 1, no. 1). Then, upon her death, her eldest child was to succeed her: in 1816–17, the office passed to Mehmed Arif Bey (Table 1, no. 2) who was then a judge and ended up his career with the high rank of *kadıasker* of Rumelia. At the exhaustion of the second generation, the office was given to the eldest member of the following generation, namely Mehmed Cemaleddin (Table 1, no. 3), and so on (*batnen bade batnin*, from generation to generation, as stated in the foundation deed). Far from exceptional, this rule of primogeniture was applied in matters of succession in various contexts in the Ottoman Empire. For instance, amongst many Alevi groups, when a spiritual guide (*mürşit*) was to be appointed, the eldest descendant had priority. Table 1 shows to what extent the rule was obeyed, with only one exception (Table 1, no. 6) for which I have no explanation. Possibly it illustrates the status of the administrator.

TABLE 1 The administrators (*mütevellis*) of Halil Hamid Pasha's foundation

	Name	Father's Name	Generation ( <i>batın</i> )	Birth–Death	Administration ( <i>tevlîyet</i> )
1	Ayşe	el-Hac Halil Ağa		–1816/7	1785–1816/7
2	Mehmed Arif	Halil Hamid Pasha	1	1769–1839	1816/7–39
3	Mehmed Cemaleddin	Mehmed Nurullah Pasha	2	1803/4–80	1839–80
4	Feride	Mehmed Raşid	3	1823–86	1880–86
5	Halil Sami Pasha	Cemal Pasha	3	1824–99	1886–99
6	Fitnat	M. Ataullah	4	1833–1907	1899–1907
7	Saliha Rabia	M. Cemaleddin	3	1839–1915	1907–15
8	Asım	M. Nurullah Neşet	4	1846–1917	1915–17
9	Atıf Pasha		4	1848–?	1917?–?
10	Fahriye	Rıza	4	1862–?	
11	?	?			
12	Kemale İşmen	Atıf Pasha	5	1873–?	
13	Übeyde Saniye Kadriye Öztürk (?)		5	–1968	–1968
14	Celal Bükey	Derviş Pasha	6	1895 (?)–1981	1973–81
15	Kerim Bükey	Asaf Derviş	7	1907–87	1986/7–87
16	Erol Bükey	Celal Bükey	7	1926–2002	1992–2002

First, as was often the case with other foundations, the prerequisite for application was different according to whether it was related to the right to administration or recognition as *evlad*. *Tevliyet* was exclusively patrilineal, with one exception. As a matter of fact, the founder said little further on his motives in the foundation deed. We may suppose that Halil Hamid Pasha wished that his material and immaterial goods should remain undivided as much as possible. This may also be a reason why the administrator was to receive no less than one third of the waqf's total income. Second, interestingly enough, the

foundation deed treats male and female family members as equal beneficiaries. Many dignitaries had acted this way in the past. This may be interpreted as a correction of Islamic law (*'ilm al-faraid*) according to which female heirs receive half the share of their male relatives of the same degree. This explains why the genealogical diagrams I have gone through are not exclusively patrilineal. But again, the patrilineal orientation prevails: the office of administrator is restricted to the *'asaba* (corresponding to *agnati*). As an Arab proverb says, 'the children of our sons are our children, whereas the children of our daughters are the children of foreign males'.<sup>4</sup> This rule had to be implemented by every administrator: practically, it had to be formalized in the diagrams with the prospect of succession to office. Thus, Erol Bükey clearly differentiated the offspring in some diagrams, colouring the names of male progeny in red whereas those of female progeny were coloured in green. He also printed a form which he would systematically send to every *evladiyet* applicant which included the following questions:

In order to complete the incomplete or unfilled portions of our foundation's genealogical tree, I request that the following information be filled out and sent to me:

Who received money from the foundation before you? Was it your mother or your father?

1/ Your name; your surname.

2/ Your place of birth and date.<sup>5</sup>

### The Last Administrators

Erol Bükey was appointed administrator in 1992. Not only did he gather the files previously organized by his father, but he also enriched them with the VGM documents transmitted to him on a regular basis in the decade that followed. He added to this material the files he himself created for his back office work. Both his secretary and his eldest daughter, İnce Bükey, assisted him in these procedures. When I was offered the opportunity to go through the archive, his daughter kindly helped me understand its very logic, differentiating between

4 'Bânûna banû abnâ'inâ wa-banâhunna abnâ' al-riğâl al-ağânibi'; Abû Ishâq al-Şirâzi, *al-Muḥaddab fi fiqh al-imâm al-Şâfi'i*, Zakaria Amirat (ed.), vol. 2 (Beirut: Dâr al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1416/1995), p. 329. I wish to thank Lahcen Daaïf for providing this reference.

5 HHP archives.

her grandfather and father's documents, identifying their respective handwritings and associating the files with the related diagrams. Some documents were written in Ottoman Turkish, since it was the official language used by the centralized administration of the imperial waqfs. Some were written in the Latin script since the Turkish state declared this script official in 1928. Others were written in both handwritings: whereas Celal Bükey (Table 1, no. 14), born in 1895, did read Ottoman, his son Erol (Table 1, no. 16), born in 1926, did not. In his last years, Celal hoped that his son would be administrator one day. He knew that if so, Erol would have to handle many Ottoman documents. Therefore, in order to help him, he provided a few of his own transcriptions from the Arabic into the Latin alphabet (Fig. 1).

After Erol Bükey died in 2002, no one officially applied for the post of administrator. Obviously, the right holders did not find the right man or woman, i.e. someone who would generously be willing to spend their retirement years on administering the foundation. In fact, an *evlad* was interested. But since he lived in Australia, he eventually declined the possibility. Two decades earlier, just after his brother Celal Bükey had died, Mehmed Rıza Derviş who was the eldest *evlad* of his generation wrote a letter of renunciation (*ferağatname*) of his right to become administrator of the waqf explaining why, as an old man, he was not up to the job.<sup>6</sup> Surely, due to the expansion of the offspring for demographic reasons, the job turned out to be more demanding. Moreover, both the general state of the estate/*evkaf* (small properties mainly) and inflation negatively affected the general level of income and profit. Last, the procedure of application to *tevlîyet* might take a long time, especially in case of legal objection. In 1970, an *evlad* named Betül Tüzüntürk complained that the candidate Celal Bükey was 74 years old, although the post required 'health and energy' that, as a 45-year-old woman, she considered herself lucky to have in abundance. Bükey eventually won the case and was appointed *mütevelli*, but it took him no less than three years to do so. When his son Erol decided to be candidate in 1987, he had to navigate through the VGM apparatus to prove his legitimacy first as an *evlad*, then as a candidate to *tevlîyet*. In this context, not only was he asked to certify his grade as a graduate of the English High School of Nişantaşı in Istanbul as a proof of literacy, but he also had to take an exam. No doubt this was something rather delicate for a respected 65-year-old man who,

6 'It is my turn to be elected as the trustee of Halil Hamid Pasha's foundation. I hereby declare that I deem it necessary to waive my right to membership of this trusteeship' (*Halil Hamid Paşa vakfının mütevelliliğine seçilme sırası bana gelmiş bulunmaktadır. Bu kerre gördüğüm lüzum üzerine bu mütevellilik üyeliği hakkımdan ferağat ettiğim beyan ederim*); Mehmed Rıza Derviş, 30 September 1981, HHP archives.



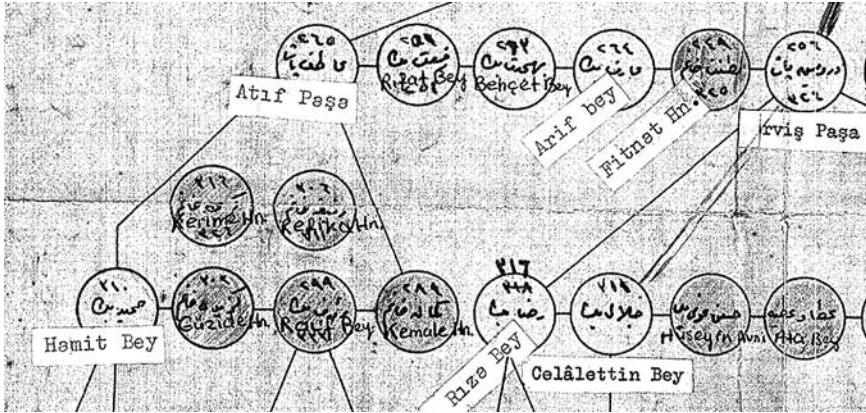


FIGURE 1 Names in a genealogical diagram transcribed from the Arabic into the Latin script (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

as a successful businessman, possessed more than all the expected credentials for the job. Furthermore, the VGM initially contested his eligibility since he was not the oldest living *evlad*. As a consequence, Bükey had no choice but to go to court. He contested the rule of primogeniture by putting forward an addendum (*zeyl*) to the foundation deed dated 1785, according to which the administration of the waqf might go to the eldest son of the eldest son, even if the former was not the eldest member of his own generation. In the end, he won the case. Nevertheless, it must have been a very frustrating experience for him since the entire procedure took no less than four years.

In 2008, a new law was passed.<sup>7</sup> After the office of administrator of any *mülhak* foundation (i.e. subject to the obligation of trusteeship), whatever its status and importance, had remained vacant for 10 years, the foundation was to be declared *mazbut*, i.e. directly administered by the state. Unless an irregularity was noticed (if either the ten-year period had not elapsed or the beneficiaries had not been informed), this transfer was considered definite. However, a case could be opened at any time by an *evlad* who wished to take up the post of administrator. Furthermore, a procedure called *niyabet* was tolerated even if it was not inscribed in the law. According to it, the beneficiaries could agree on a substitute administrator (*naib*) with no VGM control over the procedure whatsoever. As a result, the substitute administrator could collect the income of the waqf. To my knowledge, no member of Halil Hamid Pasha’s family considered

7 Article 7, Law (*Kanun*) 5737, 20 February 2008; Official Gazette no. 26800, 27 February 2008, <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5737.pdf>.



these options. In 2019 the foundation was declared *mazbut*. As a result, the family lost all effective control over it.

### The Administrator and the *Evlad*

A comparison between the diagrams and the registers reveals that many descendants of Halil Hamid Pasha did not try to reach the administrator of the foundation. Presumably, they did not want to spend time on the application process compared to the poor income to be expected, had no idea of their rights, or did not even know that they were Halil Hamid Pasha's descendants. Some of them had surely heard of the foundation from relatives while others had received genealogical diagrams from their parents. For those who were eligible to *evladiyet* and willing to apply, using a diagram that had been previously certified by an administrator was the best way to establish their rights. However, this was not always an easy task especially when the document was written in Ottoman Turkish. Sometimes the name of the candidate was explicitly mentioned, sometimes it was not, either simply missing or imprecisely quoted. In these cases, the candidate had to find alternative ways to show their credentials. In a letter she wrote to the administrator, Perran Altay claimed to be an *evlad*. She claimed that she possessed a genealogical diagram written in Ottoman Turkish ('old Turkish', in her words), sincerely regretting not to be able to use it. She could not read Ottoman Turkish, but her late father could. Fortunately, he had transcribed a few names for her. On the back of the letter, she gave an account of her lineage. She indicated that she would be happy to put the Ottoman genealogical tree at the disposal of the administrator if needed. Until then, in order to prove her right, she drew what I might call an auto-genealogical diagram (Fig. 2).

As the foundation's files reveal, the administrator regularly received such letters from people who had not yet been identified as descendants of Halil Hamid Pasha. He systematically examined his own diagrams for their direct ascendants. If he was able to locate them, he recorded the name of the new right holder in his files and proceeded to the VGM in order to register them as such. At the same time, he deleted the dead ones' names.

A register shows the way Erol Bükey worked (Fig. 3). On the first page, he noted that the register was probably started in the 1940s. We may assume that the administrator of the time had formatted the register. It encompasses various diagrams. On some pages, a lineage chart (a patrilineal section of the general diagram) was drawn until the last identified generation. The members

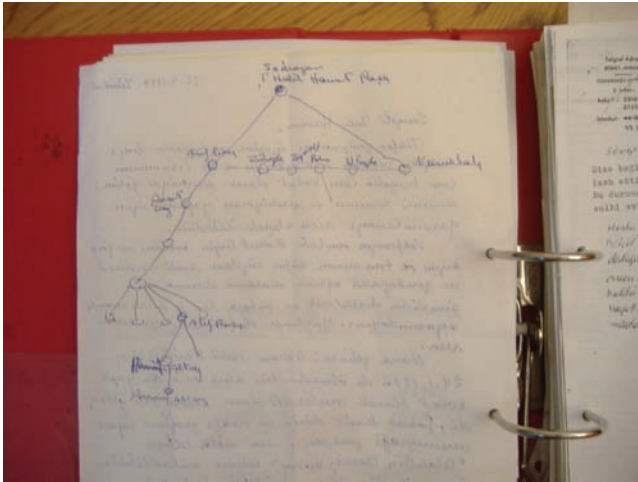


FIGURE 2 Declaring oneself an *evlad*: an auto-genealogical diagram (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

The image shows a sample from an administrator's register. It consists of a list of names and dates, with some names circled in red. The names are 'Hakk Hakkı Paşa', 'Hakk Hakkı Paşa', 'Hakk Hakkı Paşa', 'Hakk Hakkı Paşa', and 'Hakk Hakkı Paşa'. The dates are '1811', '1820', and '1830'. Below the list, there is a table with columns for 'Bakımın adı', 'Ammanın adı', 'Diyadinın tarihi', 'Diyadinın yeri', and 'Hakk Hakkı Paşa'. The table contains the following data:

Bakımın adı	Ammanın adı	Diyadinın tarihi	Diyadinın yeri	Hakk Hakkı Paşa
Dr. Hakkı		1311		Bakımın
"		1220		"
Dr.		1220		"

FIGURE 3 A sample from an administrator's register (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

were listed in a table according to the primogeniture system inscribed in the foundation deed.

By the time Erol Bükey took up the charge four decades later, many *evlad* had died. As a result, there was much to modify and delete in the register (Fig. 4). On other pages the names of the dead *evlad* were coloured in red (Fig. 5). Bükey did the same with the general diagrams he had either inherited or drawn himself (Fig. 6).

Sıra No	İsim ve Soyadı	Merguliyeti	Balaban İsmi	Anasıra İsmi	Doğduyu Yeri
1	<del>M. Mustafa Bükey</del>	<del>En Timgural</del>	<del>Süt. Lucas</del>	<del>En. Petrol</del>	<del>18.5.1881</del>
2	<del>M. Nefi Bükey</del>	<del>Del</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>2.5.1882</del>
3	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>Taşer</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>23.2.1884</del>
4	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>Taşer</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>23.2.1884</del>
5	<del>M. Mustafa Bükey</del>	<del>Horta</del>	<del>G. Hüseyin Derviş</del>	<del>Ba. Vahid</del>	<del>1282</del>
6	<del>F. Mustafa Bükey</del>	<del>Del</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>1202/100</del>
7	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>23.2.1884/100</del>
8	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>Paşer</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>"</del>	<del>11.5.1884/100</del>
9	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>1582/100</del>
10	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>1582/100</del>
11	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>1582/100</del>
12	<del>M. Hüseyin Bükey</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>M. Hüseyin</del>	<del>1582/100</del>

FIGURE 4 Deletion of the names of the dead *evlad* in a Halil Hamid Pasha's foundation register (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

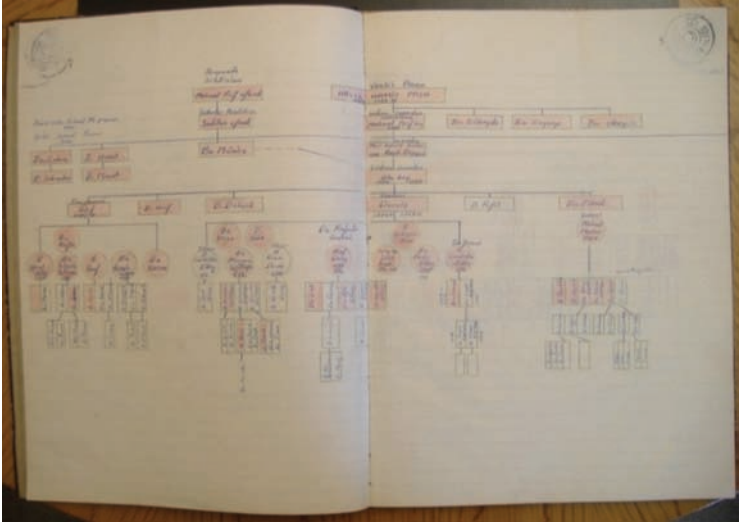


FIGURE 5 Colouring in red of the names of the dead *evlad* in a Halil Hamid Pasha's foundation register (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

Like a gardener pruning his rose bushes, Erol Bükey navigated through his collection of diagrams, sometimes scratching out names, sometimes cancelling others. Registering the new right holders was the tricky part of the job. Indeed, most of the diagrams had been drawn in such a way that it was possible

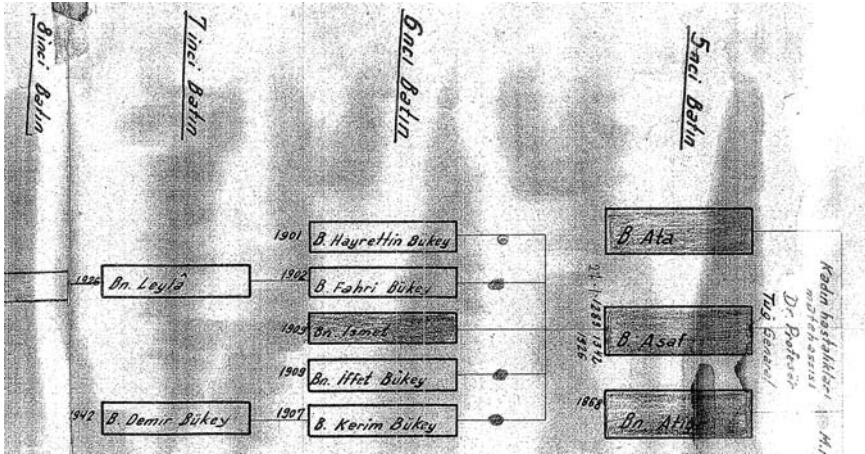


FIGURE 6 Sample of a general diagram, fifth to eighth generation (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

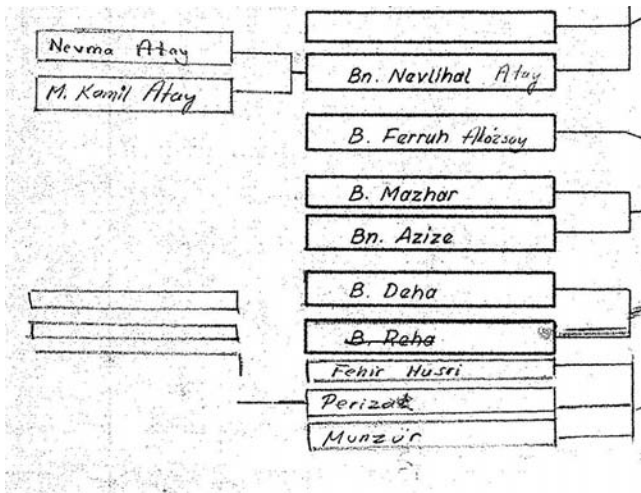


FIGURE 7 A sample of a diagram allowing for the insertion of new names and addition of family names (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

to insert new names in the decades to come (Fig. 7). The administrators did so, also adding the family names adopted after the relevant law was passed in 1934 (see ‘Atay’ and ‘Aközsoy’ in Fig. 7). This resulted in better identification of lineages for every generational degree.

Full of new names, these revised diagrams were progressively turned into preparatory documents for further genealogical diagrams. When at some point

there was no space left to insert new names, the administrator had no choice but to draw a new diagram out of the handwritten ones. Fortunately, by the 1990s he could make use of the new computerized technologies. Figure 8 provides a sample of a genealogical tree Erol Bükey prepared in the 1990s. The members of the sixth generation are basically those included in the sample in Fig. 6. But the seventh and eighth generations have been enriched with many new members which means more eligible *evlad*. This resulted in the enlargement of the pyramidal form of the diagram. In fact, it was fortunate for the administrator that the number of candidates did not increase as much as the family offspring did.

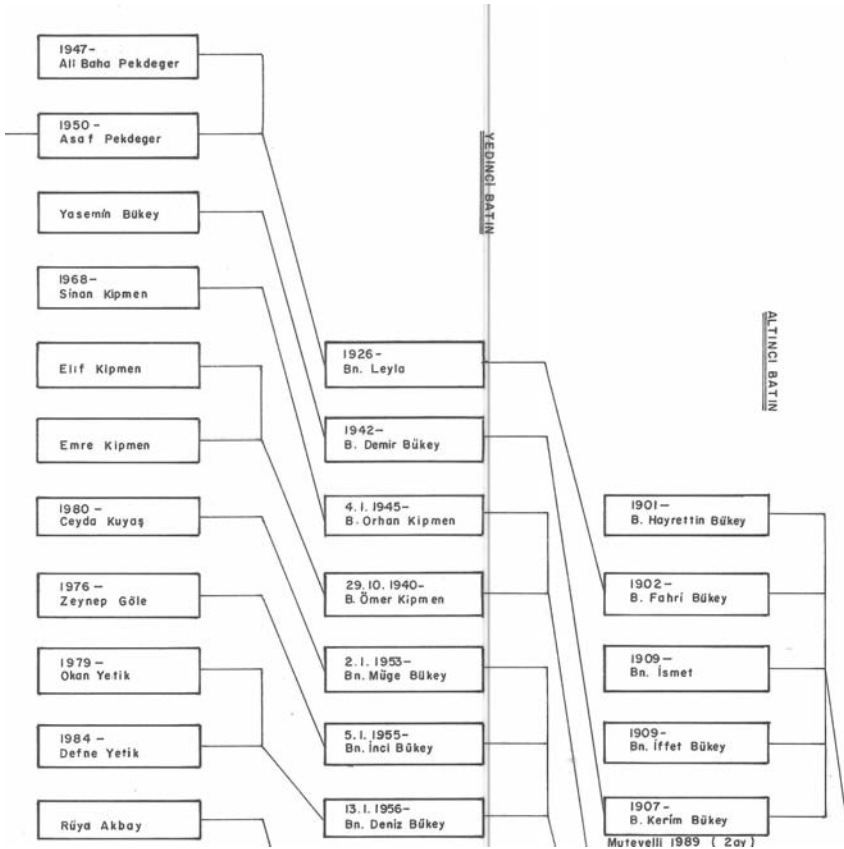


FIGURE 8 Sample of a genealogical diagram prepared by Erol Bükey, sixth to eighth generation (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

### The Administrator and the VGM

For a newly appointed administrator, the first task was to get the foundation's files back from the VGM. The procedure was a regular one. However, he could not be certain he would receive the full package that was legally owed him and administratively necessary to run the foundation. In either case, he could visit the VGM offices to collect appropriate information. His second aim was to identify the real property of the foundation. Celal Bükey knew that the waqf included more properties (*gayrimenkul*) than those previously run by the VGM (*emaneten idare*). He obviously had access to the information included in the additional waqf deeds drawn up by Halil Hamid Pasha's eldest son Mehmed Arif Bey in 1806 and 1807. I doubt whether he checked the foundation registers (*evkaf defterleri*) kept at the Ottoman Archives of the General Directorate of State Archives in Istanbul, as they were not centralized and accessible in the 1970s as they are today. Surely, he wanted to identify as many properties as he possibly could in order to collect rents from them. To do that, he scrutinized the Ottoman documents handed over to him, starting with the information included in the foundation deed (Fig. 9).

The sample in Figure 9 is from an 'Inventory of the properties listed in the foundation deeds of the waqf of former Grand Vizier Halil Hamid Pasha'. It traces properties in Isparta, Istanbul and Izmir based on the 'deed dated 1 Cemaziyülevvel 1198 (23 March 1784)'. However, in actual practice, these properties were not easy to locate. As a result, they were not easy to recover either.

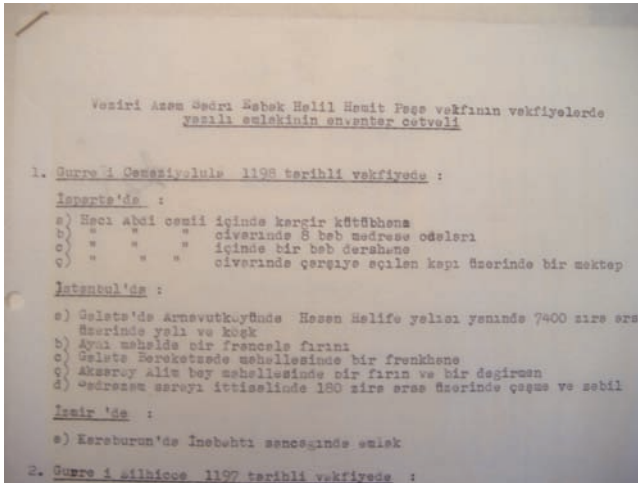


FIGURE 9 Tracing the landed properties mentioned in the foundation deed (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)



For instance, the first item in the list for Istanbul is about ‘the seaside mansion (*yalt*) and pavilion on land of 7,400 cubits (*zira*) close by the *yalu* of Hasan Halife in Arnavutköy in Galata’. This property is recorded in the foundation deed as follows: ‘The estate is located in Arnavutköy which is dependent on the city of Galata. It is adjacent to the *yalu* of Hasan Halife. Its surface exceeds 7,400 cubits.’<sup>8</sup> It corresponds exactly to what Celal Bükey noted in the inventory. However, first, no one could ensure that the land still was as clearly delimited as it had originally been: many properties of many other foundations, albeit their status of inalienability, were divided into plots through the legal practice of exchange (*istibdal*) or due to illegal appropriations and were consequently difficult to locate. Second, the description of the property in the foundation deed was not precise enough to provide effective identification: since it was acquired two centuries earlier, the *yalu* had obviously been destroyed in the meantime—I have no precise information on how and when this happened—while Arnavutköy was constantly reshaped with new streets. For this property as for the ones Bükey ended up with, he cross-checked the information drawn from the foundation deed and various lists obtained from the VGM with those he had presumably obtained from the land registry (*Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü*). Eventually, he came up with his own lists including precise locations and extent (Fig. 10).

A few years later, Celal Bükey’s son, Erol, had these lists on his desk. He had seen his late father dedicate time and energy to their preparation. He wanted to continue his work. After all the time it had taken to get himself appointed, he was quite determined. Through his social connections and after numerous enquiries he conducted in Istanbul which led some relatives to nickname him Halil Hamid Abi, he ended up locating a few properties. Some of them reflected what they had been in the glorious vizierial years of his ancestor: the Kadem-i Şerif dervish convent (*tekke*) for instance was to be found in the ward of Kasap İlyas, although it no longer hosted Sufis or pilgrims and was badly in need of renovation. A watchman (*bekçi*) was in charge. The municipality was about to rent it out. Erol Bükey successfully asserted his rights over the *tekke* built by his ancestor. Other properties had changed dramatically from the time they had been acquired by the foundation. Figure 11 shows what Bükey actually found in a street of Arnavutköy, at the location listed for the first time in the inventory drawn up by his father.

One day, Erol Bükey showed up at the shop, declared he was the owner of the land and asked for the rent. Due to inflation, it was close to zero. The tenant cannot have been happy to see the owner asking for revaluation. But Bükey

8 VGM Archives, d. 628, no. 347, p. 7.



MÜLHAKKUYENİ VAKIFLAR MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNDE  
ZAMANSTEN İBARE EDİLEN GAYRİMENKUL MÜLKLERİ

№	№2			İÇİSİ	NAHALLİ	SORAGI	ABA	FARKI KAPİ NO	EMİTİ	
Mülk. # 111		Yedigörmüş	Abdülhamid	Beşiktaş	Arnavutköy	Bayrampaşa	516	8	40	Arslan
Mülk. # 116		"	"	"	"	Saklılar	102	39	30	"
Mülk. # 111		"	"	"	"	Sarıbahçe	89	2	35	AAKAP
Mülk. # 113		"	"	"	"	Arnavutköy	82	67	28	Lügat
Mülk. # 117		"	"	"	"	Saklılar	102	40	32	Arslan
Mülk. # 115		"	"	"	Emirhan	Arnavutköy	519	8	29	"
Mülk. # 118		"	"	"	Beşiktaş	Arnavutköy	102	32	28	"
Mülk. # 126		"	"	"	Arnavutköy	Bayrampaşa	102	11	-	"
Mülk. # 117		"	"	"	Likadur	Alayunt	112	3	-	"
Mülk. # 110		"	"	"	"	"	111	2	-	"
Mülk. # 111		"	"	"	Fatih	Kempçaya	169	1	75	Ev
Mülk. # 111		"	"	"	Emirhan	Hacıpaşa	21	19	61	AAKAP

FIGURE 10 List of properties identified by the administrator of the foundation (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

was a rich man. He was more satisfied with finding the properties mentioned in the lists of his father than with earning money from them. His demands were so reasonable that after a few years of inflation, the rent was close to what it had been when he first entered the shop.

Erol Bükey obviously did his best to reconstitute the waqf. He also had to run it. As an administrator, he paid the property tax (*emlak vergisi*) every year. He also had to pay the right holders. Therefore, he had to know their names, addresses and personal account numbers at the bank dealing with every foundation in the country, namely *Vakıf Bankası*. Every year, he had to evaluate the total income of the foundation in order to distribute shares to all the right holders. During the last year of his *tevlîyet*, 2002, there were 55 of them. Since the *evlad* received two thirds of the income of the foundation, everyone received 2/165 of the total amount which, compared to their regular income, was not much. Then Bükey would order *Vakıf Bankası* that the money be transferred to every account. If later on he happened to hear from other *evlad*/relatives or was told by the VGM that one of them had died, he would have to redistribute their share to the living ones the following year. Every year he would not forget to send a payment receipt to every *evlad*. All this required the handling of many files and regular monitoring. Not only was Erol Bükey quite an organized businessman, he was obviously assisted by an efficient secretary.



FIGURE 11 A shop in Arnavutköy (40 Beyazgül Sokak) on a property belonging to Halil Hamid Pasha's foundation (HHP archives, with the kind permission of the family of Celalettin Derviş Bükey)

### Conclusion

As a newly appointed administrator, Erol Bükey was shocked by the deplorable state of the files that were transmitted to him. Ten years later, the ones his family returned to the VGM were in systematic order. Obviously, he did more than collaborating with the administration: he focused on precise tasks as much as he concentrated on the general interests of the foundation that he managed. Interestingly enough, a retired businessman did what would be normally expected from any civil servant of the VGM. This may be why his case is one that goes beyond that opposition between state and civil society that the sociology of the Turkish polity usually builds on. There is one more reason for this: thanks to Celal and Erol Bükey, the foundation managed to recover some of its properties. Since control of the foundation returned to the state later on, it can be said that a family effectively contributed to enriching state resources.

The family members I have met told me to what extent they were proud of this contribution, even if they deeply regretted the fact that the *evlad* had lost control of the waqf.

In two generations, the foundation materially encapsulated a dynastic conscience that I have previously studied through the perspective of genealogy.<sup>9</sup> I believe that the files and registers discussed in this article, albeit drawn up and used in the back office, also played a decisive role in crystallizing a lineage consciousness out of an Ottoman identity related to the wider offspring of Halil Hamid Pasha. I therefore argue that the re-Ottomanization of Turkish society, far from only reflecting the political agenda of the Islamic regime since 2002, is also the product of activities and references nurtured by elites usually depicted as ‘white Turks’.

Lastly, this case calls for reassessing the distinction usually drawn between public and private archives. Indeed, most of the documents (*şecereler*, *vakfiyeler*, typewritten letters, printed forms) that both the *evlad* and the VGM handled were the same. More than public or private, these documents need to be addressed as official writings and institutional products. A private document used by the foundation’s administrator was often the basis of an official document, whereas an official document transmitted to the administrator might later on encapsulate private, even intimate, relations he would develop with relatives. What may be treated as private actually relates to various items (handwritten notes, comments, drawings) either drawn up as preparatory support for immediate work or implemented as a posteriori tools of family identity and projection of nobility. Indeed, since imperial families under the Republic are not strictly circumscribed through private activities, the archives they are associated with need to be addressed within the framework of an evolving national ideology as much as studied as material by-products of politics.

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9 Bouquet, Olivier, “Imperial genealogies in republics: the case of Turkey”, *Revue d’histoire moderne & contemporaine*, 58/2 (2011), 146–78, <https://www.cairn-int.info/journal--2011-2-page-146.htm>; idem, “Généalogies impériales en République 11: le retour des Ottomans”, in *L’entreprise généalogique: pratiques sociales et imaginaires en Europe (XVe–XIXe siècles)*, Stéphane Jettot and Marie Lezowski (eds) (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2016), pp. 37–55.