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THE VAKIFNÂME OF RAKKAS SINÂN BEG IN KARNOBAT
(Karin-âbâd) AND THE OTTOMAN COLONIZATION OF
BULGARIAN THRACE

(14th - 15th century)

Machiel Kiel

With perhaps the exception of one epoch the humble town of Karnobat in the plains of Bulgarian Thrace did not share in the eventful history of this part of Europe. It was not situated along the main traffic artery (Belgrade Road or Crimean Road), it was never a large centre of craftsman (as Sliven) or a centre of the provincial administration (as Kazanlık or Stara Zagora), and no famous men were born or worked there (as for example the great Ottoman intellectual centre of Filibe-Plovdiv - which gave birth to a host of poets and scholars).¹ Karnobat was none of these. It emerged in the course of the 15th century as an Ottoman Turkish town, which kept till today its old Arabo-Persian name². Since the 15th c. its history was one of a slow and uneventful growth, turning to a rapid expansion only in the last fifty years³. It was probably not explicitly founded (as were the numerous towns along the Stambul-Belgrade highway) but grew spontaneously out of the need for an urban centre (market function) in a large agricultural district. In our opinion it is this epoch of

1 One could consult the tezkeres of Latifi (German translation by O. Rescher), or Kinalzâde Hasan (edition Ibrahim Kutluk, Ankara, 1978), Taşkôprüzâde's Şakayık (a German translation, made by Rescher, appeared by Zeller Verlag, Osnabrück, in 1979), Bursalı Mehmed Tahir's Osmanlı Müellifleri, recently re-edited by Fikri Yavuz and İsmail Özen; Istanbul 1972, E. J. W. Gibb, History of Ottoman Poetry (6 vols, London 1900 - 1909, and 1958 - 1963), or Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's equally voluminous Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst, Pesth, 1837 etc. to find without much trouble hosts of literary men, born or active in Filibe - Plovdiv.

2 In 1953 this name was changed into the more Bulgarian sounding «Poljanovgrad» but, happily enough, the old toponym was restored again in 1962 (compare: Petar Koledarov and Nikolai Mičev, Promenite v imenata i selištata v Balgarija, Sôfia, 1973, 130).

3 In 1972 the number of inhabitants passed the 20.000 mark (see Koledarov, Promenite p. 130).

resettling the land and reconstructing urban life which is the period in which the history of Karnobat is of real interest. Hence we will here focus on it.

The town of Karnobat is situated in the north-eastern corner of what is today Bulgarian Thrace, on the edge of a monotonous plain, immediately below a low ridge of hills. The summit of the hill still bears the name «Hisar», telling us that there once was a castle. Although the Bulgarian archeologists unfolded in the past 30 years an impressive range of activities, including the excavation of entire mediaeval settlements⁴, the castle of Karnobat was passed by them, literally. Some general observations and surface finds indicate that the castle dates back to the Byzantino-Bulgarian period, the 12th century. The district in which the forerunner of the present day Karnobat was situated was throughout the entire middle ages, since the foundation of the Bulgarian state in 681 A. D. right until the eve of the Ottoman conquest in 1360-70 a heavily contested frontier zone where destruction quickly succeeded the brief intervals of peaceful prosperity. Karnobat is just twenty km within the historical frontier of the First Bulgarian Empire (681 - 1018) the vallum which runs from the Bay of Burgas over Rusokastro, crosses the Tunca between Jambol and Elhovo and ends at the foot of the mountains south of Plovdiv⁵. In the particularly agitated 13th and 14th century the line could not be held and the scattered hill top castles became Bulgarian, then Byzantine^{5a}. The land along this ever bleeding frontier was turned into a semi-desert. The entire lowland area between Adrianople /Edirne/ and the Balkan Chain was a no-mans-land, very thinly populated and kept only by the mentioned chain of castles⁶. The forerunner of Karnobat must have been one of them. A good six km to the west of the town is another one. This was the old castle of Markeli, which commands the défilé of the Azmak River (now called: Močurica), a tributary of the Tunca which it meets

4 For example the really magnificent excavations of mediaeval Shoumen, no almost completed, or those of Lovets or Tserven, which results have largely been published in the periodicals *Arheologija*, *Izvestija na Balgarskata Arheolgičeski Institut*, and *Izvestija na Naroden Muzej Kolarovgrad / Shoumen*.

5 This rempart is known locally and in the literature as the *Jerkessia*, a corruption for the Turkish Words «a cut through the earch». Large stretches of this vallum are still very well recognisable in the terrain.

5a As these remarks are merely meant to be a short introduction I am not going to cite the vast mass of literature concerning mediaeval Bulgaro-Byzantin history. For general accounts see: Konstantin Jireček, *Geschichte der Bulgaren*, Prag, 1876, Vasil Zlatarski, *Istorija na Balgarija*, Sofia (various editions); Donald M. Nicol, *The last centuries of Byzantium*, London, 1972, Vasil Gjuselev, *Forschungen zur Geschichte Thrakiens im Mittelalter*, in: *Byzantino-Bulgarica*, No III, 1969 p. 155 vv; or: Ivan Djčev, *Die Krise der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft und die türkische Eroberung des 14. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas*, 21, 4, München, 1973, pp. 481 - 492; etc.

6 See note 14.

in Jambol. Because Markeli is situated in an almost uninhabited area a large part of its walls have been preserved while that of Karnobat disappeared gradually in the course of the last 400 years (Evlīya Çelebi still saw it as a ruin in 1659)⁷ Karnobat must have shared the events of the 13th/14th century but we know of no details, as many aspects of the numerous minor border conflicts remained unrelated. I would like to stress the character of the area between the Balkan Mountains and Edirne in the later middle ages as a semi-deserted border land because this point is usually glossed over in the Bulgarian historiography⁸. The latter preferably puts the accent on the destructive nature of the Ottoman conquest and the sufferings of their own people afterwards, who indeed carried the lions share of the weight of the new Imperial superstructure. As to the ruinous years prior to the Ottoman take over this point is preferably kept in the dark.

7 Seyâhatnâme, vol V, p. 330. Jireček remarked about Markeli that the castle was built in such a way that it protected the south against attacks from the north, which allows us to suppose that it was built by the Byzantines to protect their northern frontier (Jireček, *Das Fürstenthum Bulgarien*, Prag, Wien, Leipzig, 1891, p. 516). There is a model of the castle in the small Karnobat Museum.

8 See for example: Petar Nikov, *Turskoto zavoevanie na Balgarija i sadbata na poslednite Sišmanovci*, in: *Balgarskata Istoricheska Biblioteka*, I, Sofia 1928 p. 113 - 159; Dimitar Angelov, *Turskoto našetvie i borbata na balkanskite narod protiv našestvenitsite*, in: *Istoricheski Pregled*, IX, 1953, 4, p. 74/98; D. Angelov, *Certain aspects de la conquête des peuples balkaniques par les Turks*, in: *Byzantino-Slavica*, XVII, 1956, p. 220 - 275; Ivan Snegarov, *Turskoto vladieštvo prečka za kulturnoto razvitie na balgarskija narod i drugite balkanski narodi*, Sofia, 1958 (*The Turkish rule, obstacle for the Cultural Development of the Bulgarian Nation and other Balkan Nations*); Bistra Cvetkova, *Heroičnata saprotiva na Balgarita protiv turskoto našestvie*, Sofia, 1960; Petar Petrov, *Sadbonosni Ve kove za Balgarskata Narodnost, kraja na XIV vek - 1912.*, Sofia, 1975 (*Fateful centuries for the Bulgarian Nationality, end 14th century to 1912*); and many others. In last mentioned work (and many others aswell) we find the statement that the Turkish colonists drove away the Bulgarian population from the best soil and took it themselves. For the Bulgarians only the poor soil and the mountains remained. (p. 62/64) This is all supposed to have taken place but no any kind of reference is given, except the rethorical remark of a monk of the Holy Mountain of Athos for the situation in Macedonia. The position of northern Thrace as Byzantino-Bulgarian frontier district is not even mentioned, nor are the Catalans, the Crusaders or the extermination campaigns of Czar Kaloyan «The Slayer of Greeks» as he proudly styled himself, the man who laid the corner stone for the depopulation of Thrace. See also note 14.

The above-mentioned tendency is as old as Bulgaria itself and much is understandable as a reaction to the painful process of national rebirth, observable in various degrees in all new nations. It should be noted that this tendency ran its course and, as time progressed, began to show signs of fading away slowly. After World War II, however, this development towards a wider point of view was completely reversed and old way of writing the history of the Turkish period returned in full vigor. It is meaningful that in the adjacent Yugoslav ter-

Not much is known on the Ottoman conquest of Karnobat, or better its forerunner. Katib Çelebi⁹ placed it in 1368, Sadeddin¹⁰ tells us that it surrendered voluntarily in mentioned year, following the example of the important frontier castle of Ajdos (Aetos), which had surrendered without any trouble or disturbance. It should be added: what else could the isolated border garrisons have done, confronted as they were with a well organised enemy and without hope for relief from a disordered home front? Any how it is clear that the conquest of the castle was not a violent one, the walls were not razed after the capture but were still standing, as previously noted, in the 17th century. In this line of arguments the name of the town: *Ḳarîn-âbâd*, or: *Ḳarîn-ovası*, becomes fascinating. Does it not mean: «Castle of the Associate» (Companion, or Ally) or: Meadow of the Companion» in Arabo-Persian and Arabo-Turkish?¹¹ When we hear again of Karnobat, during the time of Yıldırım Bayezid and during the war for the throne between his sons Musa and Mehmed it was a base of the Akıncıs¹². It is sufficiently known that this force was of Christian origin. Some historians even believe that it was entirely composed of Christian converts to Islam¹³. Is it too bold to suppose that the garrison of the «Castle of the Ally», fearing to sink back to the level of landless peasant, took the service of the new lords of Thrace? Did not the people of the adjacent Rhodope district preserve right into the 19th century the memories of the voluntary surrender of the

territories, as well as among emigré Bulgarians, an entirely different process has set in, a process of taking distance from the subject, refrain from passing moral verdicts over long disappeared people or institutions, and an endeavour to see things from various sides and not only from within the narrow limit of national interest. The existence of things like Turkish culture, or literature even entered secondary Yugoslav schoolbooks. The reader himself may judge up to which degree the mentioned differences in the Bulgarian and Yugoslav historiography originate in the difference of concept of society in the mentioned countries.

9 Hadschi Chalfa, *Rumeli und Bosna*, Wien 1812, p. 35.

10 Tacü't-Tevârih, edit. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu, İstanbul, 1974, vol I, p. 135.

11 Evliyâ Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, V. p. 335, gives a very different version of the name, another example of his «Volksetymologie»? The alternation of the 'learned' Persian -âbâd with the vernacular Turkish- *ovası* is not too strange. We might cite *Eccâbâd* near Gelibolu, which also appears in old texts (Neşri, *Kâtib Çelebi*) as: *Eceovası*.

12 See for example: İnalcık, art. «Bulgaria» in *Encycl. of Islam*, New Edit.; Aşıkpaşazâde, transl. Kreutel (*Vom Hirtenzelt zur Hohen Pforte*, Graz, Wien, Köln 1959, p. 124); Sadeddin (Parmaksızoğlu), II, p. 81, etc.

13 Very pronounced so by Ernst Werner, *Die Geburt einer Grossmacht*, Wien, Köln, Granz, 1972, p. 104 - 107. The Akıncıs were, according to Werner, Greek renegates, reinforced by runaway Christian farmers and craftsman, even recruited from territories outside the Ottoman realm. Under Mehmed II, thus a hundred years after the events described here, they must have been converted to Islam, at least so according to Werner (p. 105). If one agrees with Werner or not the origin of the Akıncıs is rather uncertain.

isolated castles on condition of being admitted to the new military class? I think we have to say yes, unless fresh evidence is brought to light, proving the opposite.

It was the great Czech historian of the Balkans and first Minister of Education of the reborn Bulgaria after 1878 who, now almost a century ago pointed to the desolate state of Thrace prior to the Ottoman conquest and stressed the subsequent reconstruction and recolonization by the Turks¹⁴. Indeed, the seemingly endless wars ceased after the Ottomans had acquired the land. The incursion of Mirchea the Old of Valachia in the nineties of the 14th century and the war between Musa and Mehmed shortly afterwards were but incidents without lasting results. The process of reconstruction went on. The land remained undisturbed during the so-called Crusade of Varna from 1444, which brought such havoc and destruction in Danubian Bulgaria¹⁵. Thus from shortly after 1400 until the unhappy years around 1800, when the anarchy of the Krdžali period reigned with full terror, the Thracian plains prospered in relative peace, a peace of a length unknown since the Roman Antiquity.

Jireček has thus shown us the direction in which to seek. He had at his disposal

14 Jireček, Fürstenthum, p. 48/49. It can be added that the «Chronicle of Muntaner» (translated from the Catalan by Lady Goodenough, London, 1921) written by an eye witness of the events, gives an excellent but seldomly used review of the situation in Thrace shortly after the year 1300 and describes in detail all actions that led to the ruin of Thrace by the hardy mercenaries of the Catalan Grand Compagny. On p. 552 of this Chronicle Muntaner summarises this actions as follows: «Now it is the truth that we had been in the peninsula of Gallipoli and in the district seven years since the death of the Caesar, and we had lived there five years on the land and there was nothing left. And so, likewise, we had depopulated the all that district for ten journeys in every direction; we had destroyed all the people, so that nothing could be gathered there. Therefore we were obliged to abandon that country. And this was the decision of En Rocafort and those who were with him...» The Grand Compagny consisted at the outset of the campaign 5.000 foot soldiers and 2.500 men cavalry. Later it was reinforced by runaway Byzantine mercenaries, Muslim Turks and Christian Turks.

15 Perhaps the best account of the Crusade of Varna, mentioning quite honestly all cities and castle razed or burnt is Michael Behaim, *Zehn Gedichte zur Geschichte Österreichs und Ungarns*, edit. Th. G. von Karajan, Wien, 1848. The recently translated «Memoiren eines Janitscharen, oder Türkische Chronik (Renate Lachman, in the Series: Slavische Geschichtschreiber, No 8, Styria, Köln, Wien, Graz, 1975,) mentions Vidin (p. 99) and has other details. Another source close to the events, also mentioning details which we find by Behaim, is the «Gazavat-ı sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân, edit. Halil Inalcık and Mevlud Oğuz, Ankara, 1978. Among the cities destroyed were Vidin, Lom, Shoumen, Novi Pazar, Rousse and Kaliakra. Shoumen and Kaliakra belonged to the most important of mediaeval Bulgaria. The last mentioned was the capital of the principality of Dobrudja. Vidin had been capital of the Czardom of Sratsimir. Both did not recover but were completely deserted. Shoumen was rebuilt at a much later date and on an entirely new site, far below the old hill top town.

some vita of saints who lived in the area, some scattered notes in the Byzantine chroniclers and, closer to the actual happenings, a number of glosses in manuscripts and for the early Ottoman period only the toponymy. How incomparably better could we now reconstruct the entire process of rebuilding the destroyed land with the aid of the Mufaşşal Defter's in the Turkish archives. However regrettable it is, this is still a task for the future, as the vast majority of these documents are unpublished and hardly accessible for whatever reason it may be¹⁶.

The land of Karnobat received a major share in the recolonization of the early Ottoman period. The old toponymy of the land bears witness to this creative period¹⁷. Large groups of Anatolian Yürüks settled in the land, as well as a particularly numerous group of Tatars from southern Russia, fleeing from the Timuride onslaught¹⁸. Gökbiçin¹⁹ gave a list of no less than 133 villages in the Karnobat district, founded by Yürüks of the Kocacık group. Among them are a number of which the old names point to their nomad origin: Yürük-hacı, Yürük Kasım, Yürüklü, Yeni Yürük, Yürük-ovası, and numerous others. There are also names which denote the place the settlers originally came from, as: Ahlatlı, Germiyanlı, Maraşlı Saruhanlı, etc. all places in various parts of Anatolia. Other names recall the founder of the village, the ancient clan leader or chief of the family, as: Turhanlı, Bayezidli, Balabanlı, İskenderli, or they describe some natural features characteristic for the village, as: Değirmen-deresi (Mill Brook), Elma-dere (Vale of the Apples), Tepe Köy (Hill Village) etc. These toponyms, now obliterated and changed for newly made Bulgarian names, give a general idea of the nature and origin of the new population. A nomad element remained long, roaming in the Karnobat area. In 1641 a group of more than a hundred families (ocak) of Kocacık yürüks and smaller groups of Vize and Tanrıdağ yürüks in the Karnobat district were still registered as nomads²⁰.

The town of Karnobat thus emerged in a overwhelmingly agricultural and cattle-breeding area. It emerged below the previously existing castle. The latter was maintained by the Ottomans as a military post in the decades when their rule was still

16 A beautiful opening into this field has been made by Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *İstila devirlerinin Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri*, in: *Vakıflar Dergisi*, II, 1942, pp. 279 - 387, with entire source material given in transcription; Tayyib Gökbiçin, *Rumeli'de Yürükler, Tatarlar ve Evlâd-ı Fâtihân*, İstanbul, 1957; or articles like A. Münir Aktepe, XIV. ve XV. Asırlarda Rumeli'nin Türkler tarafından İskânına dair, in: *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, 20, pp. 299 - 312.

17 The most handy guide to the old topography is now Koledarov's work (see note 2).

18 For the colonization of the Tatars of Ak Tav see in detail: Aurel Decei, *L'Etablissement d'Aktav de la Horde d'Or dans l'empire ottoman aux temps de Yıldırım Bayezid*, in: Zeki Velidi Togan *Armagan*, İstanbul, 1950/55, p. 77 - 92.

19 Gökbiçin, *Evlâd-ı Fâtihân*, p. 129 - 133, giving the situation of 950 (1553).

20 idem.

unsettled. Perhaps it served later as the seat, or at least as a place of refuge for the local administration²¹, as Karnobat was the chef-lieu of a nahiye as early as the 15th century. In the Classical Period of the empire the castle of Karnobat was, like almost all others in Thrace, fully abandoned and left to decay by the forces of men and nature as there was no reason to maintain them. This is perhaps the most telling illustration for explaining how much the Bulgaro-Byzantine middle ages differed from the Classical Ottoman period. The process of development of Karnobat, from a cluster of houses below the castle into an Ottoman Turkish kasaba can certainly be followed in detail with help of the mufaşşal taħrirs of the Sancak of Silistra, in which «*Ḳarîn-âbâd*» was situated. I regret that this is impossible for me. It has to remain an interesting task for my Turkish colleagues.

In the second half of the 15th century Karnobat definitely became a town. This is chiefly the work of one man, Raḳḳas Sinân Beg, Ottoman governor of Silistra. While spending a month and a half of research in Sofia in 1978²² I found in a Bulgarian religious periodical of the last century the Bulgarian translation of the *Vaḳıf-nâme* of the foundations of this man in Karnobat²³. Before I turn to the context of this interesting document it would appear necessary to give first a few comments on this Sinân Beg, about whom rather little is known.

At the first glance this Sinân appears to be identical with Hoca Hızırzâde Sinân, the tutor of Fatih Sultan Mehmed, closer examination however, seems to contradict this. Hoca Hızır Beg bin Celâl from Sivrihisar, allegedly a descendant of Nasreddin Hoca, died in 863 (1456) as first Cadi of İstanbul. His life and works have been described in detail by Suheyl Ünver^{23a}. His son Yusuf, who had the *mahlas* of Sinân was born in 844 (1440) in Sivrihisar, or in Bursa, as far as one can believe the notes of Taşköprüzâde's Şaḳayik²⁴. He was in succession professor at the famous Darü'l-Hadis Medrese of Murad II in Edirne, tutor of the sultan and rose to the rank of vizier in 875 (1470/71). If we are to believe the evidence found by Uzunçarşılı he even served a term as Grand Vizier of the empire²⁵. This should have been between 881-882 (1476/77) after which date he was dismissed and sent to his native Sivrihisar,

21 See *Turski Izvori za Balgarskata Istorija*, vol I, Sofia 1964, p. 63, 69, 77, etc.

22 By invitation of the Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries at the Committee of Culture, Sofia, for whose most generous help I am highly indebted.

23 In: «*Balgarski Tserkoven Pregled*», God. 4, Knj. IV, Sofia, April 1898, pp. 43 - 48.

23a Dr. Suheyl Ünver, *Hızır Bey Celebi, Hayâtı ve Eserleri*, İstanbul, 1944.

24 Or better, Mecdi's annex (printed edition, p. 196).

25 I. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Hızır Bey oğlu Sinan Paşa'nın Vezir-i Âzamlığına dâir çok kıymetli bir vesika*, in *Belleten*, XXVII, ocak 1963, sayı 105, pp. 37 - 44. These sources are the mentioned account in Mecdi's *Zeyl* of the Şaḳayik and a newly found letter of that time, which he gives in facsimile.

as Cadi and medrese professor. When Bayezid II came to the throne he restored Sinân to the rank of vizier (1481) and made him sancak begi of Gelibolu (Gallipoli), where he died in 891 (1486). Hoca Hızırzâde Sinân Pasha was thus in Sivrihisar between 1477 and 1481. This is of importance because the other Sinân active in the years of Fatih and Bayezid II, and also a Hoca, Rağkaş Sinân, is mentioned as sancak begi of Silistra in northern Bulgaria in the same year when Hoca Hızırzâde Sinân was sent to Sivrihisar. This is mentioned in a letter from 882, published by Uzunçarşılı. This account is thus as close to the events as can be desired, and in all probability more reliable than the account of Taşköprüzâde's continuator, Mecdî, who is the principal source of the story around first mentioned Sinân. Moreover, the Kanobat foundations are from the last decade of 893 25* (=3-13 April 1488). This is at least a full two-years after Hoca Hızırzâde Sinân died. Rağkaş Sinân is clearly another person. The letter from 882 has in fact a «Sinân Pasha» who was dismissed and a separate «Rağkaş Sinân Beg» who was sent to Silistra. This Sinân must have been a relatively important man. Silistra was a large frontier district where only the most able men could be used. Although there certainly must be more evidence on the carrier of this Si-Sinân I was unable to find it. Sinân could not have been long in Silistra. In 884 (1479/80) he is mentioned as tutor (Lala) of Bayezid II, then prince, residing in Amasya²⁶. In this capacity he conquered the castle of Torul in the Pontic Mountains behind Trabzon²⁷, a region which until then had sided with the Aq Koyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan. After the mentioned event Rağkaş Sinân must have been left by Bayezid to take further care of the Trabzon area. Mahmud Goloğlu mentions this in his work on the history of Trabzon a sancağ begi between 1479 and 1489,²⁸ when he was succeeded by Prince Selîm, the later Yavuz sultan Selîm. Hence it appears that Sinân was maintained at his post also after Bayezid had succeeded to the throne. Rağkaş Sinân is again mentioned in 1486, serving in the capacity of sancak begi of Trabzon in the unhappy campaign of Hersekoğlu Ahmed Pasha to oust Mamluks from Cilicia. By then he was himself pasha. In Trabzon Rağkaş Sinân had a garden laid out with

25a The Bulg. text has «the end», which has to be the standart formulae «evâhîr, or: «the last decade.»

26 See: I. H. Danişmend, *Izahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol I, Istanbul 1971, p. 344. More details on the Ottoman princely residence of Amasya and Rağkaş Sinân see: Petra Kappert, *Die osmanischen Prinzen und ihre Residenz Amasya im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Leiden, 1976 («Rağkaş Sinân, Lâlâ» on p. 42 ff, 72 and 165).

27 Danişmend, *Kronol.*, I, p. 344; also: Mahmut Goloğlu, *Trabzon Tarihi*, Ankara, 1975, p. 19.

28 Trabzon Tarihi, p. 301. It is not clear how reliable were Goloğlu's sources for the stay of Rağkaş Sinân in Trabzon between 1479 and 1489 because in an Ottoman Timar register of the first of Rebi.ü'l-evvel 889 (=29 March 1484) a «Silistra Sancağ Begi Sinân Beg» is mentioned (See: L. Fekete, *Die Siyâkatschrift*, I. p. 124.

a çeşme erected in it, next to the Fâtîh Câmisi of that city (the former church of the Virgin Chrysokephalos). This fountain is preserved and has an inscription dated 888 (1483), which was published by Hâfîl Edhem²⁹. It gives us yet another means to pin our man down with a large degree of reliability. Besides this very scanty information on our Sinân there are a few notes in the vakıfnâme of his foundations in Karnobat. According to this safely dated source, which moreover calls our man with his lağab «Rağğaş» (= the Dancer), Sinân possessed a landed estate as mülk, situated «in the village of Köpekli in the district of Karnobat» (today it is called Skobelovo and situated in the district of Sliven) In this village Sinân had lived for a while. This is mentioned more than once in the document. He must also have lived in the town of Karnobat itself as the vakıfnâme explicitly states that he had transformed «his own house» into a mekteb. This house was situated not far from the mosque he had erected in Karnobat. Have we to conclude that Sinân was a descendant of the early Turkish colonists of the Karnobat district, the Evlâd-ı Fâtihan, who possessed the ground and hence were entitled to transform it into vakf? Or was he a *devşirme* lord who for one reason or another was stationed in a village in Thrace?. The scanty evidence we have points to the first possibility. Sinân must, if we accept the first mentioned case, have been born in Köpekli; also known as Hacı Hızır, and moved later to Karnobat. After he had made his career, in which manner I do not know, he must have conceived the idea of promoting his borough of Karnobat into a real kasaba by the erecting of a Friday Mosque (the prime requisite for being promoted from village into town), school, a bath and other objects. Karnobat was better suited for this than the village of Köpekli because it had a castle and was already the seat of the administration of a *nahiye*. Perhaps it was bigger and certainly better situated than Köpekli. The buildings in Karnobat were erected rather long before the vakıfnâme was drawn up. Local tradition maintains that they were built in 1460. Perhaps we have to bring the construction in connection with Sinân's term as governor of Silistra, in which province Karnobat was situated, as noted previously. After 1488 Rağğaş Sinân again disappears from the stage. Perhaps he died a few years later, maybe in retirement on his Thracian estate. In 1512 he was almost certainly dead. In that year the Grand Vizier of Bayezid II, Koca Muştafâ Pasha included a watermill formerly belonging to «Mescûd Çelebi ibn-i Rağğaş Sinân Beg» in the *kaza* of Jambol to his large vakf in İstanbul³⁰. This is mentioned in the *tahrîr* of İstanbul from 1546. The mill must have been transferred to the mentioned vakf during Muştafâ Pasha's

29 Trabzonda Osmanlı Kitâbeleri, in: Tarihi Osmânî Encümeni Mecmuası, No 45.

30 See: Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi and Ömer Lütfi Barkan, 953 târihli İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrîr Defteri, İstanbul, 1970, p. 367.

as Cadi and medrese professor. When Bayezid II came to the throne he restored Sinân to the rank of vizier (1481) and made him sancak begi of Gelibolu (Gallipoli), where he died in 891 (1486). Hoca Hızırzâde Sinân Pasha was thus in Sivrihisar between 1477 and 1481. This is of importance because the other Sinân active in the years of Fatih and Bayezid II, and also a Hoca, Rağkaş Sinân, is mentioned as sancak begi of Silistra in northern Bulgaria in the same year when Hoca Hızırzâde Sinân was sent to Sivrihisar. This is mentioned in a letter from 882, published by Uzunçarşılı. This account is thus as close to the events as can be desired, and in all probability more reliable than the account of Taşköprüzâde's continuator, Mecdî, who is the principal source of the story around first mentioned Sinân. Moreover, the Kanobat foundations are from the last decade of 893 25^a) (=3-13 April 1488). This is at least a full two years after Hoca Hızırzâde Sinân died. Rağkaş Sinân is clearly another person. The letter from 882 has in fact a «Sinân Pasha» who was dismissed and a separate «Rağkaş Sinân Beg» who was sent to Silistra. This Sinân must have been a relatively important man. Silistra was a large frontier district where only the most able men could be used. Although there certainly must be more evidence on the carrier of this Sinân I was unable to find it. Sinân could not have been long in Silistra. In 884 (1479/80) he is mentioned as tutor (Lala) of Bayezid II. then prince, residing in Amasya²⁶. In this capacity he conquered the castle of Torul in the Pontic Mountains behind Trabzon²⁷, a region which until then had sided with the Ak Koyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan. After the mentioned event Rağkaş Sinân must have been left by Bayezid to take further care of the Trabzon area. Mahmud Goloğlu mentions this in his work on the history of Trabzon a sancağ begi between 1479 and 1489, ²⁸ when he was succeeded by Prince Selîm, the later Yavuz sultan Selîm. Hence it appears that Sinân was maintained at his post also after Bayezid had succeeded to the throne. Rağkaş Sinân is again mentioned in 1486, serving in the capacity of sancak begi of Trabzon in the unhappy campaign of Hersekoğlu Ahmed Pasha to oust Mamluks from Cilicia. By then he was himself pasha. In Trabzon Rağkaş Sinân had a garden layed out with

25a The Bulg. text has «the end», which has to be the standart formulae «evâhir, or: «the last decade.»

26 See: I. H. Danişmend, *Izahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, vol I, Istanbul 1971, p. 344. More details on the Ottoman princely residence of Amasya and Rağkaş Sinân see: Petra Kappert, *Die osmanischen Prinzen und ihre Residenz Amasya im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Leiden, 1976 («Rağkaş Sinân, Lâlâ» on p. 42 ff, 72 and 165).

27 Danişmend, *Kronol.*, I, p. 344; also: Mahmut Goloğlu, *Trabzon Tarihi*, Ankara, 1975, p. 19.

28 *Trabzon Tarihi*, p. 301. It is not clear how reliable were Goloğlu's sources for the stay of Rağkaş Sinân in Trabzon between 1479 and 1489 because in an Ottoman Timar register of the first of Rebi.ü'l-evvel 889 (=29 March 1484) a «Silistra Sancağ Begi Sinân Beg» is mentioned (See: L. Fekete, *Die Siyâkatschrift*, I. p. 124.

a çeşme erected in it, next to the Fâtîh Câmisi of that city (the former church of the Virgin Chrysokephalos). This fountain is preserved and has an inscription dated 888 (1483), which was published by Hâlif Edhem²⁹. It gives us yet another means to pin our man down with a large degree of reliability. Besides this very scanty information on our Sinân there are a few notes in the vakıfnâme of his foundations in Karnobat. According to this safely dated source, which moreover calls our man with his lağab «Rağğaş» (= the Dancer), Sinân possessed a landed estate as mülk, situated «in the village of Köpekli in the district of Karnobat» (today it is called Skobelovo and situated in the district of Sliven) In this village Sinân had lived for a while. This is mentioned more than once in the document. He must also have lived in the town of Karnobat itself as the vakıfnâme explicitly states that he had transformed «his own house» into a mekteb. This house was situated not far from the mosque he had erected in Karnobat. Have we to conclude that Sinân was a descendant of the early Turkish colonists of the Karnobat district, the Evlâd-ı Fâtihan, who possessed the ground and hence were entitled to transform it into vakf? Or was he a *devşirme* lord who for one reason or another was stationed in a village in Thrace?. The scanty evidence we have points to the first possibility. Sinân must, if we accept the first mentioned case, have been born in Köpekli, also known as Hacı Hızır, and moved later to Karnobat. After he had made his career, in which manner I do not know, he must have conceived the idea of promoting his borough of Karnobat into a real kasaba by the erecting of a Friday Mosque (the prime requisite for being promoted from village into town), school, a bath and other objects. Karnobat was better suited for this than the village of Köpekli because it had a castle and was already the seat of the administration of a *nahiye*. Perhaps it was bigger and certainly better situated than Köpekli. The buildings in Karnobat were erected rather long before the vakıfnâme was drawn up. Local tradition maintains that they were built in 1460. Perhaps we have to bring the construction in connection with Sinân's term as governor of Silistra, in which province Karnobat was situated, as noted previously. After 1488 Rağğaş Sinân again disappears from the stage. Perhaps he died a few years later, maybe in retirement on his Thracian estate. In 1512 he was almost certainly dead. In that year the Grand Vizier of Bayezid II, Koca Muştafâ Pasha included a watermill formerly belonging to «Mescûd Çelebi ibn-i Rağğaş Sinân Beg» in the *kaza* of Jambol to his large vakf in İstanbul³⁰. This is mentioned in the *tahrîr* of İstanbul from 1546. The mill must have been transferred to the mentioned vakf during Muştafâ Pasha's

29 Trabzonda Osmanlı Kitâbeleri, in: Tarihi Osmânî Encümeni Mecmuası, No 45.

30 See: Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi and Ömer Lütfi Barkan, 953 târihli İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrîr Defteri, İstanbul, 1970, p. 367.

lifetime, thus before 1512. If Sinân was still alive when the transaction took place he would have been the one who sold it and not his son. What might be concluded is that the descendants of Sinân had property in the district of Karnobat. The stipulations in the vakıfnâme further strengthen our impression that the family of Sinân had connections with Thrace, that they came from that area. The document mentions as part of the vakıf a *hamâm* in the town of «Anhial» (= Anhialos, on the Black Sea coast, now called Pomorie) and some shops in Edirne besides the mentioned village of Köpekli and a large *mezra*³¹ between the villages of Kurt Hoca and Ak Bunar (now Vûltsin in the rayon of Karnobat, province of Burgas, and Bjäl Kladenets in the province of Sliven³¹). The villages are all close to each other, at the point where the present borders of the Bulgarian provinces of Burgas, Sliven and Jambol meet. Anhialos is 52 km to the east of Karnobat, straight through the plain, and Edirne 130 km over the old road along the Tunca, long since closed.

The works Sinân Beg founded in Karnobat were, according to the document: a *Mescid-i Câmi*, a *hamâm*, a school (*mualimhâne*), an *imâret* and a water supply system (*su yolu*), and mentioned *hamâm* in Anhialos, known as: Sinân Beg *Hamâmı*. Besides a detailed description where the landed property, devoted to the vakıf were situated there are provisions for the staff of the institution and their salaries. The provisions for the personel appears rather incomplete but this may be due to the Bulgarian translation, or better, extract. It becomes clear that the intentions of Sinân Beg were twofold, a combination of magnanimity and concern to promote Islamic culture in this part of the empire, and a healthy down to earth concern for the wellbeing of his descendants³² it is a combination of altruism and self interest which can be observed in many Ottoman vakıfs³³ and which is perhaps the very reason why the system worked so long and so well.

31 For the concordance of Turkish and Bulgarian village names see Koledarov, *Pro-menite*.

32 The stipulation that 1/3 of the revenue of the village goes to the *mütevelli*, or to the son and descendants of the founder, is unusual. More common is 10 %. For materials for comparison see the following note.

33 For publications of a great number of Ottoman vakıfnâmes see: Tayyib Gökbilgin XV - XVI. *Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livâsı Vakıflar - Mülkler - Mukataalar*, Istanbul, 1952; Hasan Kaleşi, *Najstariji Vakuški Dokumenti u Jugoslaviji na Arapskom Jeziku*, Pritina, 1972, Gliša Elezovic, *Turski Spomenici (Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, Zbornik za Istocnjačku Istorisku i Književnu Gradje*, Beograd 1940; or: Muhammed Ahmed Simsar, *The Waqfiyah of Ahmed Paşa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, London-Oxford 1940. For the Vakf system in general see: Fuad Köprülü, *L'Institution du Vakouf, sa nature juridique et son evolution historique*, in: *Vakıflar Dergisi*, Ankara, 1942, p. 3-48 (*Partie Française* - also in Turkish); or: H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, New York, 1957 and 1962, '65 and '69), vol II, p. 165 - 180, etc.

Besides a supervisor (mütevelli), and a *nazir* there should be the following persons as staff:

One teacher at the school	daily 2 dirham
one <i>ḥatîb</i> for the mosque	» 2 »
one imâm » » »	» 4 »
(this was 3 d. for his duty as imâm and one more d. for his work as Kur'an singer)	
one müezzîn » » »	» 1.5 »
one collector of the revenue of the foundation	
(câbî)	» 1 »
three Kur'an singers, 1 dirham each	» 3 »
For the mescid in the village of Köpekli:	
one imâm	» 2 »
one Kur'an singer	» 1.5 »
For the person who would carry out the repairs	
of the buildings of the foundation	» 1.5 »

There had to be a substitute for the Kur'an singer of the mescid at Köpekli but no salary is given for him. Perhaps we should understand that the 1.5. dirham for the main singer, which is relatively much, should partly be used for this substitute. The mentioned twelve men of the staff of mosque, mescid and school received thus daily 20.5 dirham. There are also provisions of one dirham for writing paper, school books and pens for the children of the school, half a dirham daily for the oil for the lamps of the Karnobat mosque, for the candles and the rush mats, and the same sum for the same three articles for the mescid of Köpekli. This brings us at a yearly total of 7.277,5 dirham. There are no provisions for the personel of the imaret (soup kitchen for the poor) although this institution definitely figures on the list of Sinân's works. There are also no provisions for the personnel of the two hamâms and no provisions as to what should be cooked and how much be spent for food at the imâret. Did Sinân Beg provide for this in an appendix (*zeyl*) to this *vaqıfnâme* somewhat later, or is the word «imâret» misunderstood when the Bulgarian translation was made? It is difficult to say. It can be added, in this context, that Evliyâ Çelebi, writing a 170 years after the *vaqıfnâme* was written, noted that Raḳkaş Sinân's foundations (*hayrâtı*) included, a mosque, mescids, children schools, tekkes, some khans (all given in the plural), and a pleasant bath, but no imâret. If the foundations of Sinân Beg did include this institution then we have to count at least four men for its staff, which gives, including three servants in each bath, certainly 23, or 24 men. If this is correct than the foundation provided livelihood for no less than a hundred people. I do not give all these numbers for their own sake but only to given an idea of what a sizeable group of people had fixed work and fixed income through this foundation and what a positive influence this relatively large group must have had on the economic life of

the emerging township. It should be added that a salary of one akçe in the last quarter of the 15th century was not unusual.

We find this amount in numerous *vaqıfnâmes*³⁴, even in the 16th century, when the value of this coin had deteriorated noticeably.

Karnobat and surroundings did not suffer from war or foreign invasion until the years round 1800, as previously stated. In this troubled time the town was half destroyed. More destruction followed during the Russian invasion of 1828/29³⁵. The town did recover from these blows but suffered again in and after 1877/78, at the eve of the independance of Bulgaria, when masses of Turks fled to Anatolia. When Jireček visited the town, in the eighties of the last century, Karnobat made a deserted impression. Most of its Turkish inhabitants had fled but their place was taken over by Bulgarians, mostly newcomers. In that time it numbered 5.096 inhabitants³⁶. In these years, as can be expected, Karnobat lost almost entirely its Turkish character. The mosques, khans, mescids and mektebs that had survived the troubles of the earlier years disappeared then. The mosque of Rağğaş Sinân Beg, locally known as the Ağ Câmî (White Mosque) was demolished around 1910. In 1978 only three Ottoman objects remain preserved in this town, all standing in the oldest part of town just below the hill of Hisar. They are the Clock Tower from 1841, built by Bulgarian masters, the Qara Câmî (Black Mosque), and the hamâm of Sinân Beg. The tower and the bath are both registered as Monument of Culture and protected by the laws of the Bulgarian state. The mosque is a reconstruction of an older building. It was, according to the preserved inscription, built (rebuilt) on order of the 'ayân of Karnobat, Halîl Ağa, «Ser-i Bevvâbîn» (Kâpucibaşı) at the Sublime Porte in the year 1241 (1825/26), thus between the anarchy of the Krdžali period and the Russian invasion^{36a}. The hamâm is an irregular version of a single-bath, which derives its special place in the history of Ottoman architecture by the profusion of stalactite work of high quality, that cover the greater part of the vaults and the domes. Stylistically it is built along the traditions of the time of Murâd II in Edirne, the metropolis close by. The bath is but of modest size but as to inventiveness and quality of execution

34 See note 33.

35 Jireček, Fürstenthum, p. 515/16.

36 This number is given by Jireček, p. 515/16. The *Sâlnâme* of the Edirne Vilayeti of 1291 (1874) gives 2.764 male inhabitants, or little over 5.000 altogether. At about the same time Felix Kanitz, *Donau Bulgarien und der Balkan*, III, p. 97, gives 700 houses, of which 400 were inhabited by Turks, 200 by Bulgarians, 60 by Spanish speaking Jews and 40 with Gipsies.

36a A plan of this mosque, a description of it and a transliteration of the mentioned inscription, as well as plan and description of the hamam of Sinân Beg will be given by me in a major work concerning the Ottoman architectural heritage in Albania, Bulgaria and Greece, now in final stage of preparation.

it does not lag behind the great Ottoman centre and is not «provincial» at all. This is a feature we can observe on a number of buildings in the Ottoman Rumeli of the 15th century and underlines the great importance the Balkans once had for the formation of the empire. As such the only preserved of all Sinân Beg's foundations is a valuable link in the chain of development of Ottoman utilitarian architecture and tells us something of the quality of the now disappeared other buildings Sinân the Dancer founded in the humble Thracian town, a value now happily realised by those in charge for the Ancient Monuments in Bulgaria today. Although the main content of the vakıfnâme of Sinân Beg was given in the above, it might nevertheless be of some utility to give an English translation³⁷ of the Bulgarian version of the old text, as the original has not yet been brought to light. I will follow the Bulgarian version as close as possible, only adding words between square brackets if strictly necessary. The words between round brackets figure in the Bulgarian text as further explanation. It might be noted that the Bulgarian translation follows closely the original as the whole makes typically the impression of a shortened Ottoman vakıfnâme, with all terms and formulations usually found there. Only the invocation and the (religious) introductory notes fail completely, as do the names of the witnesses.

«Bulgarian Antiquities.»

Extracts from the Vakfié.

First. In the vakıame (testament) on the name of foundations (vakf) of Rikas Sinan Bej, which has been made by him for the salvation of his soul in 893 at the end of Rebiul-ahır from the flight of Mohammed, has been written that he made a beautiful mescid-mosque in the town of Karin-abad (Karnobat) and since he separated from his own property, with the rights he had upon it i.a. the lands situated in the village in which he lived under the name tsjiflik [= çiftlik, under the name of a çiftçi ?]: Hadži Hızır³⁸, or with another name Köpekli in the district of Karnobat, where he also built one mescid. The lands are within the following boundaries: they start from the four sides from the large lıdža [ılıca] which lies on the river Elmalı along the river on the upper side they touch with the large Dikili taş then upwards to Yaıklık on the Kodža-dere, then to the Kodža-dere, to the place of the Church in the area of «Emirler», then to the graveyard of Upsal, then to the Dogandžik Merası and from the main Ismail mezra till Degirmendere then along the dere to the Geziler path, then along the river road to the

37 I wish to thank Dr. Harry Pijenburg, Rotterdam, for his help with the translation into English of this unusual text.

38 In this translation the Old Bulgarian letter X has been transcribed as the modern Turkish dotless -ı- because this letter approaches the Old Bulgarian one very close.

graveyard of the village of Demirhailik³⁹, then along the Kasabluk-path, then to the road which runs below the village of Eski Köpekli, then along the river road till the beginning marked, namely till the Plemata Lıdža. Afterwards the pious founder devoted to the mentioned mosque and mescid two hamams, one in the town of Karnobat and the other in the town of Anhial, known as Sinan Begovi Hamami, with all their equipment, their rights and taxes have to be spent on the functioning of the mentioned mosque and mescid and for the following functioning of the school. The founder has furthermore devoted in the capital (by that time) of Odrin [Edirne], in front of the Kebri Kapusu seven dükans around the main road, attached one to another, for the works of repair and construction of the devoted bath in Karnobat, for the water-conduit and for the repair of the conduit of running water for the holy mosque, he furthermore devoted the mentioned lands and devoted lands in the village of Köpekli with the shown borders; with all the rights on them and all the mezri,⁴⁰ Commons, right of grazing (mesarih), roads (muvarii), fruit-bearing and non-fruit bearing trees with all their sides and causes and legal taxes (rüsüm-i şeriye), and obliged rates (örfiye). The guardianship and survey of the mentioned devotions has to be carried out by the founder himself as he claimed as long as he is alive and has the use of the products, and when the light of his eyes would close (died) it should be carried out by his eldest adult son, later by their sons from generation to generation. Later he made the condition that after him his eldest son should inherit who should bear the name of Beşir Murad son of Abdullah, later his sons and their sons⁴¹). The condition is that the guardians and surveyors (mütevelii and nasiri) after they will have fulfilled their duties and obligations will take the right of guardianship from the rent of the two baths one tenth and from the products of the devoted lands one third. Who will be by this time guardian will try with a knife in his hands by all means to fulfill in all orders the use of their profits (istiglyana⁴²) for all the things of the istiglyala of the mentioned devotions and all the muagali (zanats) [crafts] and for the finishing of all the orders of using the founder made the condition of doing the utmost for the benefit of the devotions. Since

39 The Bulgarian translator added that in his time there was no village called Demir-Zhailik, but there was one called Demirdişli, in the district of Sliven.

40 Is: mezra'a, uninhabited but arable land.

41 Did Rağkas Sinân adopt a son with this name and did he change his yakıfname in the latter's interest, or is it an indication of his devşirme origin?

42 Perhaps both are to be recognized as: istiğlâl, or istiglâl (lawful, legitimate; kind of mortgage)?

the guardian of the foundations collects all the taxes he will keep them by God's will back from the rent and the income, nümat (benefit) from the tax (rüsum) and from the other revenues of the described devotions which have first of all to be spent for the prosperity of the mosque, the mescid, and the school and for the imaret (charity building), secondly for definite cases. The pious founder converted into a school his own house which is situated not far the mosque. He appointed to this school a teacher to be engaged in the teaching of the Holy Writ (Kuran) to the orphans of the inhabitants-muslims, on the condition that the teacher will not take anything from the school, he determined two dram [= dirham] (silver) a day, and from the revenue of the devotions for the ink, the books, and the pens of the pupils determined one dram a day. The pious founder determined for the function of preacher (hitabet of the mosque from the interest of the silver in any case two dram a day, for the function of priesthood (imamet) three dram a day and so for the singer (müestini) three dram a day, for the said mosque for a part (kısmeti) of the day [?] one and a half dram a day, for its džabiya (tax collector) one dram a day, for oil, candles and rush mats, from the revenue of the devotions half a dram a day. The pious founder determined and made the condition that three men out of the readers of the Koran will be engaged in reading in the said mosque every day from the thirty parts [cüz] of the Divine Book three parts [a day] from God's word. From three parts one part will be read for the soul of God's Prophet, the other for the souls of the followers of our Prophet Muhammed, the other for the soul of the pious founder. He determined for every reader one dram a day. He determined that he who is imam of the mosque that he reads every day one part of the Holy Koran and devotes this to the holy soul of God's Prophet and settled to be given for this reading one dram a day. The pious founder determined for the priesthood of the mescid built by him in the village in which he lived two dram a day: to him who is singer [müezzin] one and a half, he should have a substitute, fixing half a dram for oil, for candles and rush-mats. He determined for them who makes repairs to the foundations when necessary one and a half dram a day, and when there will appear more [necessary for the repairs], except for the mentioned expenses of the revenue of the devotions, by the hand of the guardian and by the surveyor will be spent after approval of the guardian, there where the guardian approves. The pious founder devoted all the arniz (mezrata) called by the name Kurd Hadži in the district of Karnobad, with the following boundaries, which was his property till there where the foundation is, which was his own estate and possession with all the equipment, the four sides of menti-

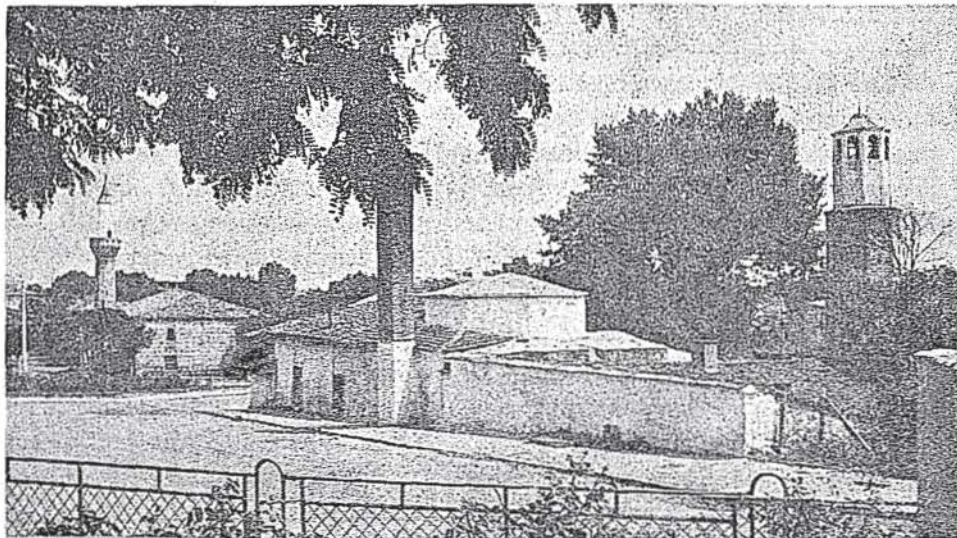
oned devoted lands are: in the east with the village of Naib-Ali Musluman, in the north to the mountain in the west it runs from the boundaries of the village of Akbunar till the path of Elmalı. These devoted lands, within all the mentioned boundaries, with all the rights, subjections, annexations, the internal and external benefits with all their rights, he made the condition that all mentioned revenue from the fallow land (mezra) should be spent only for the preachers of the mosque which he built in his viilage. He devoted the mentioned goods according to the demands of the current rules of the Holy Law, with all the true conditions devoid of violating obstacles containing the necessary decree with final true decree with honourably clear testament with eternal confirmation, a final and catagorical decree. Afterwards the local judge, having confirmed the authenticity and necessity of the foundations and having registered in his book precisely the conditions, registered it with the holy legal registration in the book according to the demands of the rules of the Holy Laws and the religious rules. According to these denotations, according to as he confessed, it has been registrated in the register of the pious foundation as well⁴³. These devotions cannot be sold, be given away, be inherited, be put in pawn in no way and by no reason be given up from now on as long as the world exists, as long as mankind is on the world, as long as God is eternal, or the prophetic substitute, (Khaliph), sultan (imperator), king (melik), Vezir (minister), amir (duke), kadi (judge of the holy law), müfti, (interpreter of the law or defender of the holy law), and professor (müderris) and from the members of mankind everybody who believes in God, in His Prophets and in the Last Judgement, nobody is allowed to violate this foundation, to misinterpret, to change, to destroy, to deny, to alter. Whoever tries to violate, he wishes to misuse it. Nobody, as he will hear about it shall rise to alter it, a curse will fall upon him because God sees and hears and knows everything, he stands upon him, he will attract to him God's curse and the of the angels and all the members of mankind. Written in the year 893, at that and of Rebiul-ahur». So far the text of the vakıfnâme of Rağkaş Sinân in Karnobat.

A number of questions have been raised in this short article, many of them have to be left unanswered. It seems reasonable to suppose that the Ottoman original of the document here dealt with must be preserved somewhere in Bulgaria. Presumably in Sofia, where all extant Ottoman material has been concentrated since long. In the past 25 years Bulgarian orientalists, cataloguing, restoring and translating impressive parts of the enormous treasure of Ottoman documents in the Sofia National Lib-

43 The register of the vakıf, kept by the Cadi.

sive have by and large concentrated on land tenure, law and economics⁴⁴. An approach characteristic of the somewhat economic-determinist concept of historiography in vogue there over the past decades. This approach counts among the reasons why not only the Ottoman belle lettres have received next to no attention but also the mass of vakıfnâmes, which are said to be preserved there. This, in spite of the wealth of information they contain on economy, not to speak of topography and social history etc. So we have to wait for what can be discovered in the Turkish archives. If this little article has caused the reader to realise what an amount of work still lies ahead of us before we can think of writing a reasonably «definite» history of the Ottoman Balkans it has more than fulfilled its purpose.

⁴⁴ I cite only the collective work, still going on: *Turski Izvori za Balgarskata Istorija*, vol I 1964, II, 1966, III, 1972, IV, 1973, V, 1974 VI, 1977 in which each volume with translations is followed with a volume of facsimiles, usually of all the documents given.



The humble Ottoman centre of Karnobat, the 15th century hamam in the centre, mosque and clock tower, both from the 19th century, at both ends.