

The Manuscript of Imam al-Bayḍāwī in the Kosovo Archives: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

It is a well-known historical fact that the Ottoman Empire was present in the Balkans for more than five centuries. This connection left a deep mark on the soul and life of the people of this region and in particular, on the people of the Republic of Kosovo. Such traces are found in written documents, architecture, art, culture, folklore, and tradition. Part of this cultural heritage, which has been preserved up to the present time, consists of the Islamic-Oriental manuscripts, which are kept in certain scientific and cultural institutions of Kosovo. A rich collection of this kind, which is of great value, is preserved in the Archives of the Republic of Kosovo in Pristina. Among the manuscripts that are part of this collection is a very precious Tafsīr (a commentary on the Qur'an) by Imam al-Bayḍāwī, which was copied by Haji Mehmet Begzade-Prishtina in 1697. Manuscripts of this type show the level of commitment of the early generations to Islamic teachings, and at the same time, they serve as evidence of the early civilization in our lands, as well as of the style and meticulousness of writing for something considered precious. The aim of the research, as can be seen from the time period in which the manuscript was written, is to shed light on the values it carries. The manuscript is considered highly important and represents first-hand research material for Islamic theologians, historians, orientalists, experts in Arabic paleography, Arabic calligraphy, and as well as for literary and cultural scholars in general. Therefore, it paves the way for other researchers to study it from different perspectives. The research method used for the realization of this paper will be mainly library research, which includes an in-depth analysis of the manuscript itself and the literature published by well-known authors related to the field of archiving and manuscripts, and particularly to the manuscript and its author.

Keywords: Islamic-Oriental manuscripts, Qur'an, Imam al-Bayḍāwī, Archive of Kosovo, Prishtina

Introduction

Although, scholars in Kosovo have dealt with oriental manuscripts during the period of the former Yugoslavia, of which Kosovo was part, like Hfz Bajram Agani,¹ Dr. Hasan Kaleshi,² Dr. Mehmed Mujezinovic,³ and Dr. Feti Mehdiu.⁴ There is a lot to be done to bring back to life the manuscripts that have survived the wars in the Balkans, and particularly the last war in Kosovo in the years 1998-1999, where many important documents and manuscripts have been burnt or destroyed. The manuscript that is aimed in this research is considered among the most important ones of its kind.

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¹ Bajram Agani, *Regjistër i librave dhe dorëshkrimeve orientale të Bibliotekës (Kutubhanes) së Vakëfit – Prishtinë* (dorëshkrim, Arkivi i Bashkësisë Islame të Kosovës, nr. I, 1958).

² Hasan Kaleshi, "Prizren kao kulturni centar za vreme turskog perioda," *Gjurmime Albanologjike* 1 (1962): 91–118.

³ Mehmed Mujezinović, "Kolekcija Orijentalnih rukopisa biblioteke Mehmed-Pašine džamije u Prizrenu," *Starine Kosova* II–III (1963): 198–205.

⁴ Feti Mehdiu, "Islam kod Albanaca u Svjetlu Rukopisnih Djela," *Međunarodni Islamski Simpozij, Zagreb*, (1997): 73–86.

Nevertheless, there is a great number of manuscripts in Islamic-Oriental languages (Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Albanian written in Arabic letters) that have survived and are still preserved in Kosovo.⁵ These manuscripts vary a lot in terms of their content, origin, and scientific and artistic value. A large number of them are quite old; they date as far as the second half of the 14th century, while the most recent ones are from the first half of the 20th century. According to a study related to the collection and the preservation of the manuscripts done in 2003 and 2004, there is a great number of manuscripts that were lost, burned or confiscated during the last century after the withdrawal of the Ottomans from the Balkan region by the Communist regime of that time.⁶ Currently, there are at least 3 000 (three thousand) oriental manuscripts identified in the whole territory of Kosovo.⁷

These valuable manuscripts that have survived until today are currently kept at several institutions: at the Library of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Prishtina, around 1000 units.⁸ At the National Library of Kosovo, about 600; at the Archives of Kosovo, 99; at the Institute for the Protection of Monuments in Prizren about 200 manuscripts have been found. There are other manuscripts found in mosques, tekkes, and private libraries, which have not been registered so far with the above-mentioned institutions and are not part of the statistics of the manuscripts.⁹ Some of the existing manuscripts are the original works of Albanian authors, and they represent only a small portion of the intellectual wealth that existed in Kosovo. Among the main institutions in Kosovo, where such manuscripts are preserved, as mentioned earlier, is the Archive of Kosovo in Pristina, which has a collection of Islamic-Oriental manuscripts in the form of unpublished complete works, which comprises a collection for antiquaries.¹⁰

The chronology of Islamic-Oriental manuscripts in the Archive of Kosovo begins with the Arabic-Persian dictionary “Tuhfa as-Sibyan,” translated into Turkish by Sheikh Jusuf ed-Daī and copied in 1437. On the other hand, the latest manuscript is a distinctive Arabic work by Rrustem Efendi Shporta (the former mufti of Prizren), titled “*Risala fī Bayani Asmail-lahi Ta'ala wa Asmai Nabiiyina alayhis-salam wa Asmai Jama'ī al-Anbiya-i al-Madhkurati fī al-Qur'ani al-adhīm,*” written in 1925.¹¹

The compilation of the manuscripts kept at the National Archives of Kosovo is as follows: 74 of them are written in Arabic; 20 in Turkish; 2 in Persian; 1 in Persian and Turkish combined; 1 in Arabic and Turkish; 1 in Arabic and Persian; and 1 in the Albanian language with Arabic letters. Three of these manuscripts are very unique and belong to different years, starting from 1561 “*Sharh Rahati al-Qulab,*” 1885 “*Ijāzatname,*” and 1925 “*Risala fī Bayani Asmail-lahi Ta'ala ...*”¹²

The topics discussed by the Islamic-Oriental manuscripts found in this collection are of different important fields of study. But the topics that prevail are as follows: religious studies, jurisprudence,

⁵ The terminology *Islamic-Oriental manuscripts*, used in this paper, is meant to covers all manuscripts written with arabic alphabet (Arabic letters) although they may be in different languages such as: Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Albanian.

⁶ Nehat Krasniqi, *Zhvillimi i kulturës shqiptare me ndikime orientale prej shekullit XVIII deri në fillimet e Rilindjes Kombëtare* (Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik, 2024), 194.

⁷ The oldest manuscript in Kosovo is preserved at the National University Library of Prishtina. The latter was copied in 1347.

⁸ Mahmud Abdulkadir Arnaut, *Katalogu i dorëshkrimeve arabe në Bibliotekën e Bashkësisë Islame të Kosovës* (Prishtinë: Dituria Islame, 2012), 13–14.

⁹ Sadik Mehmeti, *Dorëshkrimet orientale në Arkivin e Kosovës* (Prishtinë: Arkivi i Kosovës, 2008), 11.

¹⁰ Mehmeti, *Dorëshkrimet orientale*, 11.

¹¹ Mehmeti, *Dorëshkrimet orientale*, 12.

¹² Mehmeti, *Dorëshkrimet orientale*, 12.

and philosophy. Some manuscripts belong to the field of literature and especially to linguistics, as well as manuscripts related to natural sciences. Another division of these manuscripts is as follows: one manuscript of the Noble Qur'an; 5 in the field of *Tafsīr*; 4 in the field of *Hadith*; 19 in the field of Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*); 21 in the field of ethics (*Akhlaq*); 2 in the field of Islamic belief system (*Aqidah*); 22 in the field of language (grammar and syntax); 1 in the field of rhetorics; 8 in the field of poetry; 3 in the field of mysticism (*Tasawwuf*); 3 in the field of philosophy; 1 in the field of history; 3 *Kanunname*; 1 biography; 1 *Ijāzatname* (diploma); 3 dictionaries and 1 encyclopedia.¹³

The manuscripts belonging to the field of the Qur'an and its sciences are divided into: one copy of the Noble Qur'an in 1840 (copied by Hafiz Muhamed Hamidi), three manuscripts from the science of *Tafsīr* (commentaries of the Qur'an), and six manuscripts from the discipline of *Tajwid* (the art of recitation of the Noble Qur'an). Each one of these manuscripts is interesting and important, with great historical and values too. Considering the fact that within a collection of 99 manuscripts preserved at the National Archives, 10% of them are related to the studies of the Noble Qur'an. This is a sign that shows the devotion and the will of the early generations in preserving, learning, studying, commenting on, and the desire to understand the Noble Qur'an and its sciences.¹⁴ Studies show that this culture of studying and researching even very narrow fields of science has always been encouraged since the early historical years of the Muslim civilization.¹⁵

Imam al-Bayḍāwī and his *Tafsīr*

Two of the three copies related to the field of *Tafsīr* that are kept in the collection of Islamic-Oriental manuscripts in the Archives of Kosovo, are works of Umar Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ali Abu al-Hajr Nasiruddin al-Bayḍāwī known as Imam al-Bayḍāwī (d.1286)¹⁶ which is not a mere coincidence. His *Tafsīr* has been and remains one of the most famous and well-known *Tafsīrs* among the ulema of Kosova. Alongside the “*al-Kashshaf*” by *Zamakhshari* (1144).¹⁷ It is the *Tafsīr* that has been taught as a textbook in the madrassas of Kosovo and the region for centuries during the Ottoman era, as evidenced by the *Ijāzatname*/diplomas issued by these madrassas.¹⁸

Furthermore, it has also been commented on by Muslim scholars in Kosovo, whether in the form of lectures or handwritten works. In the “*Chronicle/Manakib*” written by Mufti Tahir Efendi (d. 1883) from Prizren, it is found that *Mevlana Müdderis Ali Efendi*, - who had built a mosque in Prizren in 1581 and who was the *Müdderis* (teacher) of the “Mehmet Pasha” Madrasah, - had commented on Imam *al-Bayḍāwī's Tafsīr*,¹⁹ due to which he became well-known and appreciated by scholars. Omer “*Fani*” Effendi from Dibra, a lecturer in the Hagia Sophia Mosque and one of the greatest scholars of his time in religious disciplines, became generally known by the nickname

¹³ Fehmi Sogukoglu, “The Dichotomy of Juz’i and Kulli in the Subject of Islamic Theology: A Preliminary Proposal,” *Journal al-Afkar* 26, no. 2 (2024): 605–636.

¹⁴ Saleh Ben Tahar Machouche dhe Benaouda Bensaid, “Ethics in Muslim Writing and Research Methodology: The Case Ibn Khaldun’s Scholarly Writing,” *Journal al-Tamaddun* 17, no. 2 (2022): 39–52.

¹⁵ Safiai et al., “The Influence and Adaptation of Observatories in Islamic Civilization: A Case of Malaysia,” *Al-Tamaddun* 19, no. 1 (2024): 75–91.

¹⁶ Süleyman Uludağ, “Beyzavî,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1992), 100–102.

¹⁷ Mustafa Öztürk and Mehmet Suat Mertoğlu, “al-Kaşşaf (Hakaiku’t-tanzil),” në *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 44 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2013), 235–238.

¹⁸ Öztürk and Mertoğlu, “al-Kaşşaf (Hakaiku’t-tanzil),” 235–238.

¹⁹ Nehat Krasniqi, *Kontribute albanologjike: Studime dhe dokumente historike e letrare të periudhës osmane* (Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik, 2010), 94.

“*al-Tafsīr*” (the Commentator) since he was distinguished in the commentary of the Qur'an.²⁰

In 1506, the philanthropist and well-known endower Ishak Çelebi from the city of Manastir (currently part of North Macedonia), alongside many other *Tafsīrs* and other manuscripts, donated the *Tafsīr* of Imam al-Bayḍāwī, written in four volumes.²¹ Another important person from a noble Albanian family, Mehmet Pasha Kačaniku (the son of the famous Koca Sinan Pasha, who established many waqf institutions), on the occasion of the legalization of his endowments in 1608, donated to his newly founded library in the city of Kačanik the *Tafsīr* of Imam Al-Bayḍāwī, together with it also six “*Mushafs*” and several *Tafsīrs* of other authors as well.²² Handwritten copies of al-Bayḍāwī's *Tafsīr* and his commentaries and super commentaries (“*Sharh*” and “*Hashije*”) are also preserved in other collections of Islamic-Oriental manuscripts in Kosovo. In the libraries of the earliest ulema, printed copies of this *Tafsīr* can be found, which shows the popularity that this work had.

Imam al-Bayḍāwī was born in Bayda in the vicinity of Shiraz. He is known by the nickname “al-Qadi” because he was a judge for a long time. He wrote various works in the most different important fields of Islamic sciences, among them: *Tafsīr*; *Hadith*; Islamic jurisprudence; apologetics; logic and linguistics. After serving as a judge for a long time in Shiraz, he moved to Tabriz where he died in 685AH /1286AD.²³

His *Tafsīr* is called “*Anwar at-Tanzil wa Asrar at-Ta'wil*” (“The Light of Revelation and the Secrets of Commentary”). To some extent, it is an improvement and simplification of al-Zamakhshari's “*Kashshaf*.”²⁴ In his *Tafsīr*, al-Bayḍāwī follows the direction of “*Ahlu Sunnah wa al-Jama'a*” and, among Sunni scholars, it is highly valued. al-Bayḍāwī is in the group of scholars who have made a rational scientific commentary on the Qur'an without neglecting the linguistic analysis.

This *Tafsīr* has been published several times in the West and in the East. Among the ulema it was also known as Imam Beyzavi, or “Beyzavi's *Tafsīr*” or simply “Beyzavi.” This work has dozens of commentaries and glosses. The best known is the “*Hashiya*” “*Gloss*” in 1530 by Muhammad bin ash-Shaykh Muslihuddin Mustafa arr-Rumi also known as Shayh Zade (who died in 1543). This gloss is best known as حاشية شيخ زاده على التفسير البيضاوي “*Hashiya Shayh Zada ala al-Tafsīri al-Bayḍāwī*” (Shaikh Zade's Gloss in Baydawi's *Tafsīr*),²⁵ which is exactly the focus of our interest in this research.²⁶

Analytical Description of The Manuscript

The manuscript of Imam al-Bayḍāwī's *Tafsīr* that we have examined is written in Arabic. It has a 23x16 cm format, while the text is 18x11 cm. There is a total of 126 sheets (352 pages). It is vocalized, which is an uncommon occurrence for oriental manuscripts of that particular time. It

²⁰ Hasan Kaleshi, “Roli i shqiptarëve në letërsitë orientale,” *Albanian Culture Seminar for Foreigners* 2 (1976): 187-196.

²¹ Hasan Kaleshi, *Najstariji vakufski dokumenti u Jugoslavije na arapskom jeziku* (Prishtinë: Zajednica naučnih ustanova Kosova, 1972), 190.

²² Hasan Kaleshi and Mehmed Mehmedovski, *Tri vakufnami na Kačanikli Mehmed paša* (Shkup: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1958), 40.

²³ For the death year of Imam Baydawi, two different years are mentioned: 1286 and 1319, but the more accurate seems to be the year 1286.

²⁴ Öztürk and Mertoğlu, “al-Kaṣṣaf (Hakaiku't-tanzil),” 235-238.

²⁵ Öztürk and Mertoğlu, “al-Kaṣṣaf (Hakaiku't-tanzil),” 100-102.

²⁶ Öztürk and Mertoğlu, “al-Kaṣṣaf (Hakaiku't-tanzil),” 100-102.

was copied by a single person and is in good condition. It is bound in hardback. The copy is quite accurate, with a very nice type of *Ta'liq* script. The main text has 6-9 lines on every page, as does the commentary of the work, which was written interlineally.

The gloss is written in the margins, has more lines, and is more compact. The writing is very readable. The commentary is noticeably written in smaller letters than the letters in the main text. The main text is framed in red ink with letters and lines.²⁷

The manuscript begins with the chapter “*an-Naba*,” which is the 78th chapter of the Noble Qur’an. It is the first chapter of the last *juz*’u/part²⁸ of the Qur’an. It ends with the chapter “*al-Nas*” which is the last chapter of the Qur’an. In other words, it is the last part of al-Bayḍāwī’s *Tafsīr* with Sheikh Zade’s Gloss (“*Hashiy*”).²⁹

Figure 1: Facsimile of the first and second page of the manuscript



The Person Who Copied It and the Year It was Copied

The copying (of both the main work and the gloss), as written at the end of the manuscript, was done by *Haji Mehmeti*, nicknamed *Begzade* from *Prishtina*, on Tuesday, the 28th of the month of *Jamadu al-akhir* of the year 1108 AH, which corresponds to January 22, 1697 AD.

قد وقع الفراغ من كتب تفسير الاخير من الاجزاء القرآنية للامام البيضاوى. في يوم الثلاثاء من شهر جمادي
الآخر لسنة ثمان و مائة بعد الالف من هجرة من له العز و الشرف. على يد احقر الوري الفقير الحقير المعترف
بالعجز والتقصير الحاج محمد الشهير ببكزاده الپرشتنوى غفر الله له و لوالديه ...

Haj Mehmet Begzade closes this note of his with a couplet in the form of prayers in the classical Persian language, which leads us to think that he might have also been involved in poetry:

Ilaha afw ferma jormi ma ra - لها عفو فرما جرم مارا
Be hakk-i hanedani Mustafa ra - بحق خاندان مصطفى را
“O Lord, forgive our sins
For the sake of (Muhammad) Mustafa's family.”

At the very end of the manuscript, in the concluding part of the gloss, the copyist, that is Haji

²⁷ Sadik Mehmeti, *Dorëshkrimet orientale në Arkivin e Kosovës*, 12.

²⁸ Juz is the 30th part of the Qur’an. The Qur’an is divided in 30 parts.

²⁹ Mehmeti, p.12

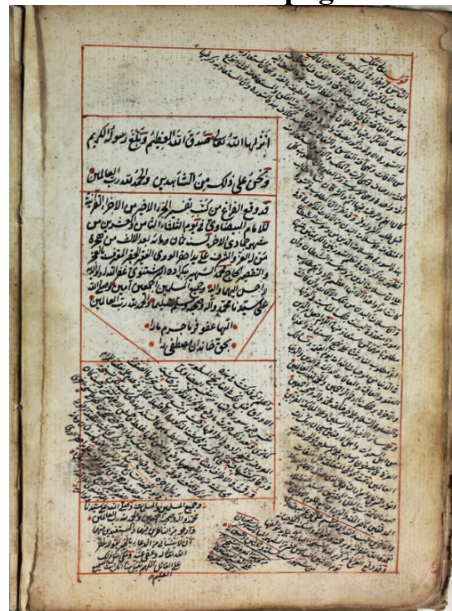
Mehmet Begzade, gives some interesting and important explanations in Arabic about the course of work during the copying process, namely, the completion of this volume.³⁰ He writes that due to the lack of space, some parts of the “*Hashiye*” could not be placed exactly next to the corresponding lines of the main text; therefore, he marked the remaining parts with numbers and wrote them on separate pages.³¹

Wherever he made mistakes during copying, he marked them with three red dots and gave the correct versions on separate pages of the manuscript. The copyist recommends that, in case of any future description of this work, the places marked with three red dots be compared with some other copy.³² From the copyist himself, we understand that the main text of the work was the first to be written (on January 22, 1697), and was followed later by the gloss, which was written after nearly six months, on June 7, 1697 (17 Dhul-ka’de of the year 1108 AH).

At the end of the manuscript, Haji Mehmeti from Prishtina asks all those who use this manuscript not to forget to say a prayer for him and to ask Allah to forgive him.

وا رجوا من الناظرين فيها ان لا ينساني من
الدعاء بالخير بقوله غفر الله تعالى له و عفى عنه...

Figure 2: Facsimile of the last page of the manuscript



Vakifnames (the Legal Documents of the Waqf)

The manuscript, as it is written on its first page, was bequeathed by the two daughters of Haji Mehmet, the copyist of this manuscript, in the year 1123 H/1711 AD. The word “*vakifname*” derives from the Arabic word “*waqf*” meaning “confinement” and “prohibition” and the Persian word “*name*”, meaning *book or document*, i.e., “*book on endowments*”. *Vakifnames* are spiritual

³⁰ Nehat Krasniqi, *Zhvillimi i kulturës shqiptare me ndikime orientale prej shekullit XVIII deri në fillimet e Rilindjes Kombëtare* (Prishtina: Albanological Institute of Prishtina, 2024) p. 194.

³¹ Semra Vasija-Terholli, “Suzi Celebiu – Prizrenasi dhe vakëfet e tij,” *Edukata Islame* 138 (2025): 109–141.

³² Vasija-Terholli, “Suzi Celebiu – Prizrenasi dhe vakëfet e tij,” 109-141.

acts, acts of donation, which have the character of a court-decision document, because they contain the form of registration, which was introduced for legal certainty.³³ The text of the *vakifname* of our manuscript, in its Albanian translation, with some abbreviations, says:

All praise is due to Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon His Messenger Muhammad, the master of the messengers, as well as his pure family. The owners of this precious manuscript of Imam al-Bayḍāwī (may God's mercy be upon him), Khatija and Afifa, daughters of Haji Mehmet Begzade, due to their desire to do good deeds and for the sake of their father's soul, endow this manuscript in 1711, to serve the seekers of knowledge in the city of Prishtina (Kosovo). May Allah protect it from destruction and troubles! They dedicate it as a waqf according to the rules of Sharia, convinced that, as such, it should not be sold, pledged, gifted, or transferred from one city to another or from one place to another, furthermore, it should not be altered, "Then whoever alters the bequest after he has heard it - the sin is only upon those who have altered it..."³⁴

Whoever takes part in its alienation and alters or opposes these conditions of waqf deserves the curse of Allah, the angels, and people in general until the Day of Resurrection. As for those who keep to and implement the conditions of this waqf, may Allah be pleased with them. Whoever uses and reads this noble *Tafsīr*, we ask him not to forget to say a prayer for us. May Allah forgive us and all believers."³⁵

Witnessed by: Haji Ibrahim Efendi (*waiz*), Behlul Efendi Zade Hasan Efendi (*waiz*), Sheikh Mehmet Efendi Zade (*waiz*), Abdurrahman Aga, Abdylbaka Aga, Ibrahim Aga, Musli Aga, Salih Çelebi, Ibrahim Çelebi, and others.

This *vakifname* also has an annex stating that Khatija and Afifa stipulated that the person responsible and custodian of this work will be Skender Aga, to be followed by his children and those who come after them, generation after generation.³⁶

الحمد لله حمد الواقعين و الصلوة على رسوله محمد سيد المرسلين و على اله الطيبين الطاهرين اما بعد فان صاحبة هذا التفسير الشريف للامام البيضاوى عليه رحمة الباري خديجة و عفيفة بنتا الحاج محمد الشهير بيكزاده قد افرزتا و اخرجتا من اطيب اموالهما و وقفتا و حبستا لروح ابيهما فى عام ثلث و عشرين و مائة و الف لطالبي العلم بمدينة البرشتنة المحمية صانها الله عن الافات و البلية وقفا صحيحا شرعيا و حبسا صريحا و عيا لازما مؤيدا بحيث لا يباع و لا يرهن و لا يوهن و لا ينقل من مدينة الى مدينة و من بلد الى بلد و لا يبدل فمن بدله بعد ما سمعه فانما اثمه على الذين يبدلونه و من سعى فى الابطال و الابدال و خالف و بدا هذه الشروط فعليه لعنة الله و الملائكة و الناس اجمعين الى يوم الغروب و من رعى و حفظ شرط الوقف رضى الله عنه رضى الابرار و من نظر و قراء من هذا التفسير الشريف ارجوا ان لا ينسو نى فى الدعاء المستجاب غفر الله لنا و لجميع المؤمنين و المؤمنات.

وقد شرطنا التولية والحفظ على اقربائهما الاقرب والاقرب و فى حال حيوتهما على روح عفوه اسكندراغا ولاولاده وان شغل

شهود الحال: الحاج ابراهيم افندى – الواعظ

³³ Dževat Hodžić, "Vakuf i Islamska Prosvjeta u Našim Krajevima," *Islamska Misao* 66 (1984): 72–85.

³⁴ Referring to the Qur'anic verse 181 of *al-Baqarah*

³⁵ Hodžić, "Vakuf i Islamska Prosvjeta," 32.

³⁶ Hodžić, "Vakuf i Islamska Prosvjeta," 32.

بهلول افندی زاده حسن افندی – الواعظ
الشيخ محمد افندی زاده – الواعظ
عبد الرحمن اغا
عبد الباقي اغا
ابراهيم اغا
مصل اغا
صالح چلبی
ابراهيم چلبی و غیرهم

Figure 3: Facsimile of the vakifname of the manuscript



Features and Importance of the Manuscript

The reasons why this manuscript was chosen among others found at the National Archives to be studied are because of the importance it has for scientific and research purposes, which can be named as follows:

First, this manuscript once again confirms the finding that Albanians, from the time they got to know the Qur'an and accepted it (14th-15th centuries) as their Holy Book, did not stay, so to speak, in passive contact with it or become static observers.³⁷ On the contrary, they became, in the true meaning of the word, “*Ahli Quran*”, implementers of its teachings by putting themselves at its service and became its bearers and cultivators of the Noble Qur'an, by: reading; studying; memorizing; copying it (handwriting), commenting on it, and later on also later by translating it into Albanian. In other words, the Albanian population, self-consciously and by their own will, became part of the Qur'anic dynamics.³⁸

³⁷ Abdullah Hamiti, “Tradita e Hershme Letrare në Kosovë: Suzi dhe Shemi nga Prizreni,” *Edukata Islame* 134 (2024): 95–111.

³⁸ Kujtim Kasami, *Përkthimi i parë i Kur'anit Kerim shqip – dyzet vjet në duar të lexuesit shqiptar, 1985–2025* (Kërçovë: DiJa, 2025), 61.

Second, as it was mentioned before, this manuscript once again proves that Imam al-Bayḍāwī's *Tafsīr* with its glosses and commentaries was one of the most popular and well-known *Tafsīrs* among the 'ulama of Kosovo for a long time.³⁹

Third, the time when this manuscript was copied has its historical value, because it was copied in 1697, which is more than three centuries ago; this is a fact that gives more value to this important manuscript.

Fourth, the copying of this manuscript was the work of a prominent personality from Pristina, Haji Mehmeti, called Begzade. This title, Begzade, was given to personalities who have made a great contribution to society.

Fifth, Haji Mehmeti-Begzade from Pristina not only copied this work, but also made additional notes, next to the text and in the margins. Moreover, in addition to the Gloss (*Hashiyyah*) of Sheikh Zade, the copyist also brought explanations from "*Tafsīr al-wasīṭ*" of Abu al-Hasen an-Nisaburi.⁴⁰ We call this data very important and of interest to the researchers interested in the field of *Tafsīr* in Kosovo, who must appreciate the degree of the original contribution of Haji Mehmeti-Begzade in this field, something that goes beyond the interests and beyond the basic idea of this paper. Although considering the notes made in this manuscript, we understand that there is an original contribution of the copyist, even if he made compilations from commentaries and *hashiye* of different authors and put them next to the "*Hashiye*" of Sheikh Zade. Although comparing issues of this nature is a real test for researchers, apart from being important for science, it also gives them extraordinary satisfaction.

Sixth, the manuscript was endowed by the two daughters of the copyist of this manuscript, i.e. by Haji Mehmeti's daughters, in 1711, which shows that Haji Mehmeti was dead by this time or had died that year.

The need to comment on the content of the text of this *vakifname* would certainly, in our opinion, dilute the power of its meaning. Therefore, we can only conclude that this *vakifname* in Arabic is among the most typical, complete, and longest written in manuscripts. It has all the elements of a *vakifname*, such as Invocation (*tahmid*), exposition (*expositio*), disposition (*disposition*), conditions (*ṣurut*), dating (*tarih*), testimony (*Ishhad*), and even *the annex* (*Zayl*).⁴¹ The research shows that there was no study conducted in the country about the way manuscripts were endowed, about the history of the authors and the donors, the conditions set by the donors, and the witnesses of the *vakifname*, despite their importance and the multidisciplinary content. A study of this nature would be very important for the future researchers.⁴²

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, we can agree that two issues emerge as a must for those who study the Qur'an and its legacy in Kosovo and beyond: *First*, continuous work must be done to illuminate the contribution of Albanians to the studies of the Noble Qur'an and its disciplines. The work done in

³⁹ Feti Mehdiu, *Silinmez Izler: Katkılar 1980–2020* (Prishtinë: Dija, 2024), 121–123.

⁴⁰ Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Ahmad b. Ali al-Wahidi an-Nisaburi, died 468/1075. He is the author of many works in the field of the Qur'an commentary, the most famous are as follows: "*Tafsīr al-Wasit*", "*Tafsīr al-Wajiz*" and "*Tafsīr al-Basit*".

⁴¹ Kaleši, *Najstariji vakufi*, pp. 55-63.

⁴² Ramadan Shkodra, "Manifestimi i Mevludit Dashuri, Zotim e Besatim pr rrugen e Muhamed Mustafase", *Takvimi No. 130* (2024) 5-13

this direction, despite all efforts, leaves much to be desired. And this work cannot be done without gathering, researching and studying Islamic-Oriental manuscripts that are kept in different libraries (public and private) in Kosovo and beyond. Further efforts to identify manuscripts that provide data on the contribution of Albanians to the Qur'an and its sciences remain an open issue and calls for further research.

The *second* objective is to illuminate the life and work of Haji Mehmet Begzade from Prishtina. Even though much is already known about his life, he is the descendant of a noble Beyler family from Prishtina, as his last name shows,⁴³ that he lived in the second half of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century, that he was a scholar, that he was a copyist, that he had two daughters, Khatija Hanem and Afife Hanem, who bequeathed his manuscript, that he had a rich library of manuscripts, that his library was bequeathed to the Waqf Library of Prishtina in 1951 by Haji Faik Hamdi Begzade, a late descendant of the Begzade family, who was appointed as a librarian at this library, we still do not know many aspects of his life and work.⁴⁴

The research has shown that this manuscript completes and enriches the catalogs of Oriental-Islamic manuscripts at the level of our country and abroad. Likewise, through this manuscript, we get to know the contribution made by early Muslim scholars of Kosovo in the 17th century. They contributed to different sciences and wrote in oriental-Islamic languages.⁴⁵ Therefore, at the end of this research, we would recommend that this manuscript with these important values should be given professional treatment by digitalizing it and making it available for future researchers, not limiting it to Kosovo citizens only.

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⁴³ Cahid Baltaci, *Osmanlı Medreseleri (XV–XVI Yüzyillarda)*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2005), 172.

⁴⁴ Archive of the Islamic Community of Kosovo, Waqf Directorate (Prishtina), Document 17, Box 42 (1951).

⁴⁵ Sadik Mehmeti, “Biblioteka Qendrore e Vakëfit në Prishtinë 1951–1961,” *Dituria Islame* 161 (2004): 39–41.

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