



EVKAF

Newspaper of Goodness and Culture

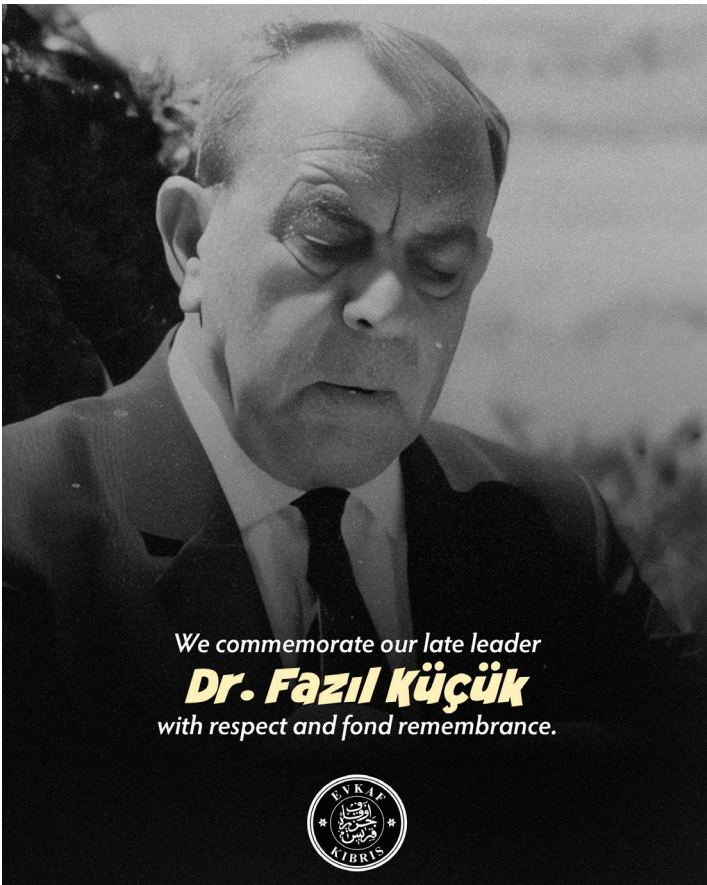
"Your compassion will bring compassion."

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The 455th Anniversary of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration Was Celebrated with a Ceremony

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We commemorate our late leader
Dr. Fazıl Küçük
with respect and fond remembrance.



Sinan Pasha Mosque

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Evkaf 455 Years Old

This year, we are proud to mark the 455th anniversary of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, which has served the people of Cyprus for centuries and left a deep imprint on the social, cultural and economic landscape of society. At the same time, we are marking the 70th anniversary of the transfer of endowment assets and their administration from the British Colonial Administration to the Turkish Cypriot community.

The waqf tradition, stretching from 1571 to the present day, is not merely the history of an institution; it is also the embodiment of goodness, solidarity and social justice on this land.

Our predecessors built a 'waqf civilisation' by dedicating their wealth and property to the service of society in accordance with their beliefs; this civilisation has served everyone, regardless of religion, language or ethnicity, for centuries. The waqf civilisation is one of the most beautiful manifestations of social solidarity and sharing.

The waqfs established in Cyprus from the Ottoman period onwards have provided services across a wide range of areas for centuries, from education to healthcare, from supporting those in need to preserving religious structures.

With the British Colonial Administration taking control of the island in 1878, waqf properties in Cyprus faced years of neglect and mismanagement. However, following determined efforts in 1956, the administration of the waqfs was returned to the control of the Turkish Cypriot community and restored to its original mission.

Today, the Cyprus Vakıf Administration continues its work with the strength drawn from its roots, guided by an approach suited to the needs of the modern age. As the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, we consider it our duty not only to preserve this deep-rooted heritage but also to carry it forward into the future in a manner suited to the needs of the times.

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The Cyprus Evkaf Administration continues to illuminate the future with its heritage of 455 years

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The wide-ranging work we undertake—from education to social assistance, and from the preservation of cultural heritage to sustainable projects—is the most tangible demonstration that the spirit of the endowment remains a living value. Our institution, which shapes the future whilst preserving its historical heritage, continues to build a strong bridge between the past and the future.

On this significant anniversary, we pay tribute with respect and gratitude to the founders of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, all the administrators who have contributed their efforts, and the philanthropists who keep the spirit of endowment alive; we reaffirm our commitment to continuing to move forward with the same determination on the path of serving our community.



**Third Prize****Second Prize**

The waqfs' artefacts have been revived in photographs

The Cyprus Evkaf Administration's 455th anniversary celebrations included the Waqf Heritage Photography Competition, which was held under the sponsorship of Turkcell Northern Cyprus.

The competition aimed to document the historical, cultural and aesthetic value of foundation heritage from different perspectives and to reinterpret it through the art of photography.

The winners were announced at the awards ceremony, which was held at the Headquarters Building. Each photograph offered a unique perspective on the story of the endowment heritage, spanning from the past

to the present.

The awards were presented to the winners by Murat Küçüközdemir, General Manager of Northern Cyprus Turkcell.

Fazilet Avukat won third prize for her work "Apostolos Andreas", Besime Tanul won second prize for her work "Akış", and Tevfik Ulual won first prize for his work "Lala Mustafa Paşa Mosque".

Throughout the award ceremony, it was emphasised once again that the foundation's works are not merely historical structures; they are also values that carry the community's memory, identity and continuity.

**First Prize**

The winners of the "Competing in Kindness" project have been awarded

The award ceremony for the 'Guide to Goodness' Competition, held as part of the 'Competing in Goodness' project—organised for the first time this year in collaboration between the Cyprus Evkaf Administration's Goodness Team and the Education Advisory Office of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Nicosia—took place with a large turnout.

Held as part of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration's anniversary celebrations, the ceremony recognised not only the winning projects but also the young people who contribute to spreading kindness, strengthening a culture of sharing, and bringing hope to the community.

The project aimed to foster a sense of mutual aid, solidarity and social responsibility, particularly among secondary school and high school students. The students' projects creatively embodied the concept of 'kindness', which lies at the heart of the waqf's culture. In the secondary school category, the 'Taşacak Bu Ramazan' team took first place, whilst 'İyilik Hilali' came second and the 'Sakız Orucu; Kötülük Bizi Bozar' team came third.



In the secondary school category, the "Hababam" team was awarded first place, whilst "In the Footsteps of the Crescent" came second and the "Reaching the Summit of Goodness" team took third place.

As the awards were presented to the winning teams, the supervising teachers and students received a huge round of applause. Speakers at the ceremony emphasised that the projects presented by the young people offered hope for the future.

The Scientific Work on the Cultural Heritage of Turkish Cypriot Waqfs is Being Passed on to Future Generations

As part of the collaborative efforts between the Cyprus Evkaf Administration (Evkaf) and the Ankara University of Social Sciences (ASBÜ) Northern Cyprus Campus, a significant work that brings together the heritage of the waqfs with scientific knowledge has been presented to the public.

The book launch, signing session and panel discussion held at the Lefkoşa Bedesten once again demonstrated that waqfs are not only a legacy of the past, but are also a guiding value for the present and the future.

The event was also attended by Hayrullah Çelebi, Deputy Director General of Foundations of the Republic of Turkey, and Murat Seçilir, Regional Director of Foundations in Kayseri, Turkey.

The book, which was prepared by compiling the papers presented at last year's "International Symposium on Turkish Cypriot Waqfs: Legal Dimensions", was published as a concrete outcome of academic knowledge and archival research.

Published with the support of Hiperlink as the publication sponsor, the work has established a robust knowledge base shedding light on the history of endowments through the examination, digitisation and archiving of numerous historical documents during the preparation process.

The panel, which began with opening speeches by Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tümer, General Director of the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harun Tunçer, Editor of Hiperlink



Publications, featured Prof. Dr. Enver Arpa sharing his assessments regarding the Islamic and Turkish-Islamic endowment heritage in the world and in Cyprus. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emete Gözügüzelli, meanwhile, addressed the issue of Turkish endowment properties seized in Cyprus within a legal and historical framework. Dr Zeki Akçam, a Lecturer, also made significant observations regarding Turkish cemeteries, which are among the lost elements of cultural heritage.



A Meaningful Theatre Project for Children

The social awareness-focused theatre project, launched by the Kindness Volunteers Team operating under the Cyprus Evkaf Administration, has been successfully completed. The play titled 'How Can I Become a Superhero?', produced by the theatre club, was met with great enthusiasm when it was performed for primary school pupils.

As part of World Theatre Day, celebrated annually on 27 March, the project brought the educational and transformative power of the arts to children.

The play, staged at six pilot schools selected across different regions as part of the project, was presented to pupils free of charge. The play, which stood out for its educational and entertaining content, raised awareness among children regarding fundamental values such as environmental cleanliness, solidarity and mutual aid.

The performances began at Lefke İstiklal Primary School and Özgürlük Primary School, and were concluded with performances at Dikmen, Mehmetçik, Tatlısu and Arabahmet

primary schools. During the project, hundreds of pupils had the opportunity to experience theatre. By harnessing the power of theatre, the project aimed to ensure that children not only had an enjoyable time but also developed a sense of social responsibility, thereby contributing to the development of sensitive individuals for the future.

Following the events, the programmes concluded on a pleasant note with pupils being served milk and nuts to promote awareness of healthy eating.



The Cyprus Evkaf Administration took part in an event organised to raise environmental awareness and promote a greener future. The event, which was attended by staff from the organisation and the Kindness Volunteers Team, aimed to contribute to the natural environment. Officials highlighted the significance of leaving a more habitable and greener environment for future generations, and stated that such environmentally focused activities would persist





Sinan Paşa Mosque

Sinan Pasha Mosque is a prominent foundation building situated within the walls of Famagusta and regarded as one of the city's most magnificent historic structures.

Sinan Pasha Mosque is a significant waqf landmark located within the walls of Famagusta and is regarded as one of the city's most magnificent historic buildings.

Commonly known as the "Wheat Mosque", the building was constructed in the 14th century in the Gothic style using cut stone. Originally used as the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, this monumental structure was converted into a mosque following the Ottoman conquest of Gazimağusa, with the addition of a mihrab, minbar and minaret, and came to be known by the name of Sinan Pasha, one of the commanders of the conquest.

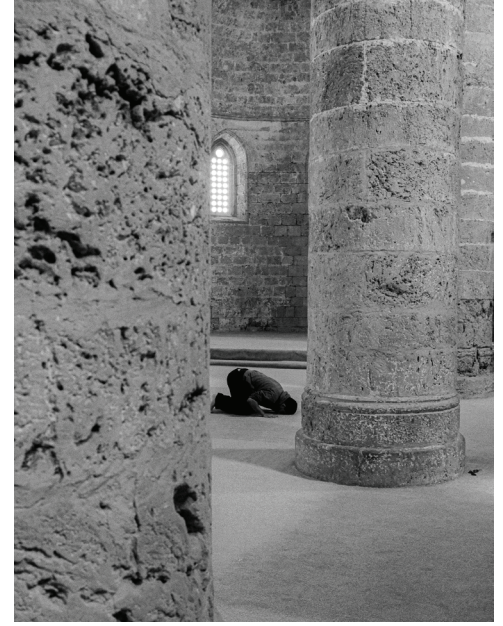
The building has served various functions throughout history. During the British colonial period, it was used at various times as a grain store, packing house and warehouse, leading to the widespread use of the name 'Wheat Mosque'. Its use for wheat storage, particularly during the war years, further cemented this name.

Having undergone various restorations over the years, the building has also served as a museum and public library at certain times.

During the restoration works, significant traces of medieval architecture, wall coats of arms and ancient gravestones were uncovered; the building's historical layers have become more visible.

This basilica-plan structure, with its three-aisled layout, cross-vaulted roof system and impressive stone architecture, reflects the architectural continuity stretching from the Middle Ages to the Ottoman era. With elements added during the Ottoman period, it constitutes a rare cultural heritage site that bears traces of both Islam and earlier eras.

It is known that there was once a cemetery surrounding the mosque, though only two significant graves have survived to the present day. One of these belongs to Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi, a renowned Ottoman statesman and the author of the "Paris Sefaretnamesi". This figure, who holds a special place in the history of Ottoman diplomacy, passed away in Gazimağusa in 1731 and was buried in the mosque's cemetery. The other grave belongs to Veli Efendizade Mehmet Emin Efendi, the Janissary Commander. These graves are among the significant examples of classical



Ottoman tombstone art in Gazimağusa.

Sinan Pasha Mosque holds a special place not only for its architectural value but also for demonstrating the continuity of the waqf civilisation on the island. The fact that it has served various functions over the centuries to meet the needs of different eras demonstrates that this structure has preserved its vitality in the collective memory. Bearing the traces of different eras in every stone, this monument tangibly illustrates the protective and sustaining role of the waqf culture in Cyprus. Today, Sinan Pasha Mosque is not merely a place of worship; it continues to exist as a unique monument reflecting Cyprus's multi-layered history, waqf civilisation and architectural heritage.



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