

The evolution of the waqf among the Greek Orthodox of Antioch depended on the measures taken by the Ottoman Empire regarding this institution. We can note three decisive periods there. From the beginning of the Ottoman occupation until the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the new authority imposed a seizure of the religious institutions' properties. From the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the 18<sup>th</sup>, sultans themselves granted grounds in the public domain to their descendants and their entourages. The same practice was followed by governors in the provinces and the tax farmers of the area. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the sultans sought to recover the income from these lands for the benefit of the Treasury and a period of reform was started which proceeded in three stages and affected the structure of the waqf.

Regarding the Greek Orthodox Church, the system already known and practiced within the Byzantine empire for dealing with church properties, which inspired the institution of the waqf in Islam, had to adapt to the new requirements and restrictions of Shar'. The beginnings of the Ottoman occupation with restrictions imposed on external religious practices in the cities encouraged the monastic foundations in the country.

These foundations, supported by the 18<sup>th</sup> century changes, came to prominence in the management of important areas of agriculture. These played a major role in the centralization of production and the distribution of work and were intermediaries between the international market and the local economy. The monasteries came to be the first to play the role of banks in Mount Lebanon.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century reforms, which introduced the laity into the management of the businesses of the church, brought a decentralization of the estates and the specialization of services to adapt to the new needs of the population. As for the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these monasteries became the promoters of the schools which were at the basis of the Arab cultural rebirth.