EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE MUSLIM POPULATION IN THE VILAYET OF MONASTIR (1878-1912)

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Abstract

The primary educational institutions of the Muslim population in the Vilayet of Monastir (Manastir) were mosques, mektebs (elementary schools), madrasas, and tekes (dervish lodges). After 1839, social reforms began to be implemented in the Ottoman Empire, and a part of these reforms was applied to education across the entire empire. The reforms, which envisioned the opening of secular schools, dealt a heavy blow to the existing religious schools. Among the schools attended by Muslim children in the Vilayet of Monastir, categorized by level, the most well-represented were primary schools, middle schools (*rushdiye*), high schools, preschools, vocational schools, and schools for females. In the final decades of the 19th century, pedagogical schools, experimental schools, a girls' high school, a civil high school, a military high school, and a military pro-gymnasium operated in the city of Monastir.

Keywords: *educational institutions, Muslim population, Vilayet of Monastir, Ottoman sources*

Introduction

In the Islamic world, education had a centuries-old tradition and was present in both official and informal institutions. During the Ottoman period, most of the *waqf* (endowment) properties were built for the dissemination of Islamic education and culture.
In the second half of the 19th century, through the Temporary Council for Education (*Geçici Maarif Meclisi*) and the Council for Public Education (*Meclis-i Maarif-i Umumiye*), several measures were taken to reform the educational system. These steps preceded the establishment of the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Nezareti*) and the Regulation for Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*).
The primary educational institutions of the Muslim population in the Vilayet of Monastir were mosques, mektebs, madrasas, and tekes. Besides being religious sites, mosques in many places served as educational centers for centuries; examples of this in Macedonia persisted even after 1912.

Methodology

The primary source for the preparation of this paper consists of five yearbooks (salnames) of the Vilayet of Monastir published between 1892 and 1896 (*Bitola Salnamesi* 1310/1892; 1311/1893; 1312/1894; 1313/1895; 1314/1896), obtained from the Ottoman State Archives (*Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi* - BOA), as well as two unpublished archival documents which have been transcribed and translated into Albanian. We have approached these historical sources with caution, as some statistical data were unverified, which could otherwise lead to an inaccurate depiction of reality.

Educational reforms during the Tanzimat period

Genuine efforts to reform primary schools in the Ottoman Empire were made during the reign of Sultan Abdulmejid I. The Temporary Council for Education (*Geçici Maarif Meclisi*), which consisted of elected members, began its operations on March 13, 1845. It prepared a report calling for the reorganization of existing primary schools. Among other measures, it envisioned

student grading and the administration of examinations. In June 1846, the Council for Public Education (*Meclis-i Maarif-i Umumiye*) was established.
In 1847, a directive prepared by the Directorate for Public Schools (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti*), which served as a guide for teachers, marked the beginning of a new phase for primary schools. According to this directive, primary education lasted four years and served as the foundation for secondary schools. The use of blackboards, pencils, and ink became mandatory in the classroom, and children were required to attend school regularly.
In 1857, with the establishment of the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Nezareti*), the first reforms were undertaken; however, they were not implemented until 1863. The comprehensive reform of the educational system had to await the Regulation for Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) in 1869. The section containing regulations related to primary education was divided into four themes: general regulations, instruction hours and examinations, teachers, and financial matters. During the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II, the issue of compulsory education secured its place in the Constitution of 1876 (*Kanun-i Esasi*) (IRCICA, 2009, pp. 443-449).
In 1882, the Ministry of Education attempted to eliminate the dual educational system—specifically, to separate the traditional track from the modern one. For this purpose, primary schools and teacher-training (pedagogical) schools were opened in the major provincial cities to prepare educators. By 1909, the majority of primary schools had been adapted to the new educational curriculum (Kodaman, 1988, pp. 86-90).
Despite the aforementioned changes, *rushdiye* schools could be considered a type of intermediate institution, as they followed primary schools and served as preparatory schools for higher secondary education. After 1869, they were classified as one tier above primary schools and one tier below high schools (*idadiye*) (Kodaman, 1988, pp. 91-94).
Based on a decision by the Ministry of Education, the reform of teacher-training schools began in 1846. The first school of this kind opened in Istanbul on March 6, 1848, representing the first institution for teacher training in the Ottoman Empire outside the *madrasa* system. These schools were given high priority. According to the newly introduced regulations, a graduate was required to complete at least a five-year practical internship before being employed as a teacher in a *rushdiye*. Instruction in these pedagogical schools lasted three years and took place five days a week. No other school of this type was opened until 1862. Teacher training remained at the center of attention throughout all reforms within the Ottoman educational system. In 1874, this type of schooling was split into two tracks: the first track prepared teachers for primary schools and lasted two years, while the second track prepared teachers for secondary schools and lasted three years (IRCICA, 2009, pp. 453-457).

Educational Institutions in the Vilayet of Monastir

The numerous laws of the general legislation of the Ottoman Empire concerning the regulation of the school system were of great importance for the development of education in Macedonia. Among the schools in Macedonia attended by Muslim children, categorized by level, the most well-represented were primary, middle (*rushdiye*), high, preschool, vocational, and schools for females.
In the Sanjak of Monastir, there was a total of 15 *madrasas* in 1875, namely: 9 in the city of Monastir, 4 in the city of Prilep, and one *madrasa* each in the cities of Ohrid and Kičevo. Despite the difficult political circumstances resulting from the destructive Russo-Ottoman War, the number of *madrasas* continued to grow. Thus, in 1887/1888, there was a total of 29 *madrasas* in the Sanjak of Monastir: 17 in the city of Monastir, 9 in the city of Prilep, 2 in the city of Ohrid, and 1 in Kičevo (Bello, 2014, p. 201).

In 1911, there were seven *madrasas* in the city of Monastir, six of which were located adjacent to mosques and therefore bore the same name. These *madrasas* were: the Isakije *madrasa*, the Yeni Mosque *madrasa*, the Sungur Chaush-Bey *madrasa*, and the Sherif Bey, Tevfikiye, Feyziye, and Koca Kadi *madrasas* (Tevfik, 2016, pp. 52-53).

In the year 1311/1893, four *idadiye* (high schools), 23 *rushdiye* (middle schools), and 291 *iptidaiye* and *sibyan* mektebs (primary schools) operated in the Kaza of Monastir. Two *idadiye*, 6 *rushdiye*, and 127 *iptidaiye* and *sibyan* mektebs were designated for the Muslim population, while the other educational institutions were designated for Greeks, Vlachs, Bulgarians, and Jews (Bitola Salnamesi, 1893, p. 175).

In the towns that were part of the Vilayet of Monastir, as well as in the sanjaks of Dibra, Veles, and Elbasan, a total of 304 *rushdiye*, *iptidaiye*, and *sibyan* mektebs were also operational, of which 195 were intended for the Muslim population and 109 for the Christian population. *Iptidai* schools were opened in almost all large villages within the Vilayet of Monastir, where students were evaluated based on their achievements. Alongside the *iptidai* schools, the *sibyan* mektebs also continued their activities.

In the year 1312/1894, the Education Commission in the Kaza of Monastir consisted of the following members: the Mufti Efendi as chairman, and Raif Efendi, Salim Efendi, Rustem Efendi, Eshref Efendi, and Hadji Ismail Aga as members. In the *rushdiye* school, Xhafer Efendi served as the first teacher, Ibrahim Efendi as the second teacher, Mehmet Efendi as the third teacher, Rifat Efendi as the teacher for the *riq'ah* script, and Hasan Aga as the guard and caretaker (Bitola Salnamesi, 1894, p. 216).

In the year 1312/1894, the Education Commission in the Sanjak of Dibra was composed of the Mufti Efendi as chairman, and Hafiz Xhelal Efendi, Nuredin Efendi, and Xhelal Bey as members, with Shaban Efendi serving as secretary and minute-taker. In the *rushdiye* school, instruction was led by Mehmed Arif Efendi, a *mudarris* (professor) from Bursa; Hafiz Xhelal served as the first teacher, Husein Remzi Bey as the second teacher and teacher of the *riq'ah* script, and Umer Aga as the guard (Bitola Salnamesi, 1895, p. 262).

The following year, the teaching staff mentioned for the school's operations included: Hayri Efendi as director and teacher of French and History; Mehmet Emin Efendi as teacher of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian; Hasan Efendi as teacher of Fine Arts and Calligraphy; Hasan Hilmi Efendi as teacher of Religious Sciences; Hafiz Ali Efendi as teacher of Geography; Mehmet Nuri Efendi as teacher of Mathematics; and Aleksandri as teacher of Fine Arts (Bitola Salnamesi, 1895, p. 273).

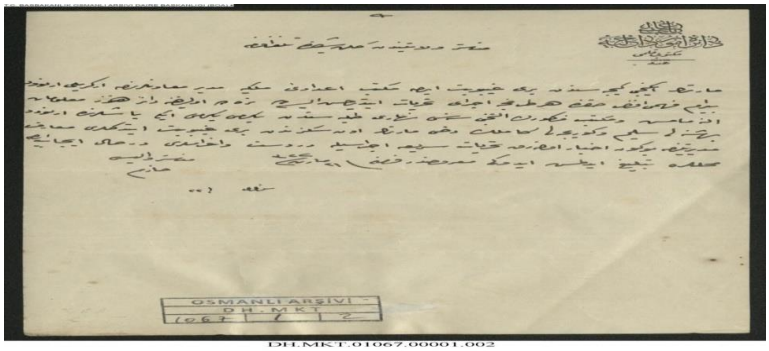
In the year 1313/1895, at the *rushdiye* school of Prilep, Xhafer Efendi served as the first teacher, Ibrahim Efendi as the second teacher, Mustafa Efendi as the third teacher, Hilmi Efendi as the teacher of the *riq'ah* script, and Hadji Hasan Aga as the guard and caretaker (Bitola Salnamesi, 1895, p. 98).

In the final decades of the 19th century, an experimental school also operated in the city of Monastir. This school was highly organized and served as an auxiliary school (for conducting practical exercises). A girls' high school, designated for female students of the Islamic faith, was also operational in Monastir. In the academic year 1895/1896, 46 female students attended the girls' high school, where they were taught by three female teachers: Emine Nuri, Ifet, and Fatime. By the academic year 1900/1901, the number of female students had nearly doubled, reaching 84 (Abazi, 1997, p. 146).

Among the schools in Monastir, special mention must be made of the city's civil high school (*idadiye*), which prepared new personnel for the administration of the Vilayet of Monastir. The curriculum and syllabus of this school were expanded to include subjects from the natural and social sciences, commerce, as well as the instruction of five foreign languages. In the academic year 1899/1900, 212 students attended this high school, of whom 186 were Muslim and 26

were Christian. In addition to the director, this school employed three deputy directors, a secretary, and a physician. In 1899, the director of the school was Ahmet Fevziu.
In addition to the civil high school, a military high school (*idadiye*) operated in Monastir, preparing personnel for the Ottoman Third Army stationed there. Besides military subjects, the curriculum included engineering, geometry, and mathematics. The school featured its own dormitory. In the academic year 1895/1896, 245 cadets (students) were educated there. Alongside the military high school, a military pro-gymnasium known as *Rüştiye-i Askeriye* (military *rushdiye*) operated in Monastir, admitting students who had completed primary school. The course of study at this school lasted three years. In 1895/1896, a total of 565 students attended this institution (Abazi, 1997, pp. 146-148).
At the end of the 19th century, a teacher-training (pedagogical) school known as *Darülmuallimin* (House of Teachers) also existed in Monastir, which prepared personnel to meet the needs of primary schools in the Vilayet of Monastir. Many children from all regions of the Vilayet of Monastir, including towns such as Korçë, Elbasan, Ohrid, Struga, and Dibra, attended this school. The program of study lasted four years. In addition to theoretical instruction, practical training hours were conducted once a week. In 1899, this school had 14 students, and two years later, the enrollment reached 19 students. Graduates of this school earned the right to be employed as teachers in primary schools or to continue their higher education in Istanbul (Abazi, 1997, p. 154).

Unpublished Ottoman Archival Documents on the Origin of Albanian Teachers and Students



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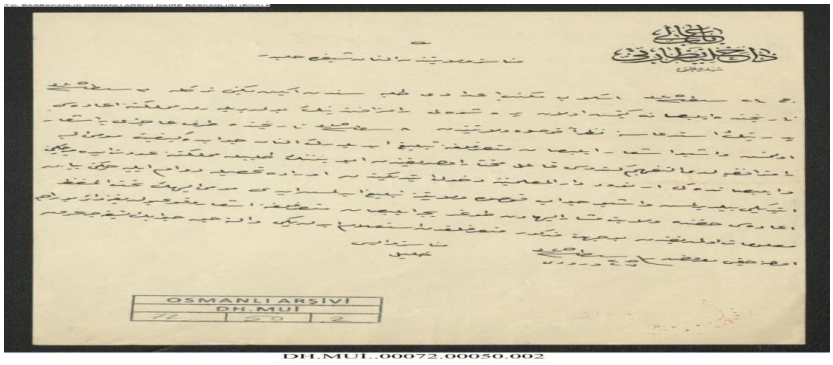
Directorate of Internal Affairs – Written Correspondence (Outward Telegrams)

Complaint Received from Monastir

Regarding the failure to report for duty by the Director of the Civil High School (*İdadiye-i Mülkiye*), Mr. Bajram Fehmiu, an Albanian from Gjirokastra. Despite extensive searches conducted in all directions, he has not yet been located anywhere. Furthermore, two other Albanians, Selim and Qamil, have also departed from this school without a trace. The school has been left without a director and teachers; therefore, immediate action must be taken in this regard. An urgent response and new appointments to these positions are requested.
March 21, 1322 / July 5, 1906
Governor (*Vali*) of Monastir: Hazim
(BOA: DH. MKT, box: 01067, folder: 00001, doc: 002).



Correspondence Addressed to: The Sublime Porte

Ministry of the Internal Affairs

The Vilayet of Monastir specifies data regarding student enrollment figures. On this occasion, it is reported that a student named Ramiz from Preševo departed from the idadiye school of Skopje to continue his studies at the school of Elbasan, dated February 2–23, 1325. Further details indicate that the student left without providing notice and without authorization, under the assumption that he was returning to his birthplace.
February 24, 1325 / April 8, 1910
Governor (*Vali*) of Monastir: Halil
(BOA: DH. MUİ, box: 00072, folder: 00050, doc: 002).

Conclusion

The Muslim population in the Vilayet of Monastir during the period of 1878–1912 faced numerous difficulties in the development of education and culture. Among the schools in the Vilayet of Monastir attended by Muslim children, categorized by level, the most well-represented were primary schools, middle schools (*rushdiye*), high schools, preschools, vocational schools, and schools for females. Since the utilized archival sources only mention individuals of Islamic affiliation, based on relevant historical evidence, we assess that the majority of both the students recorded in the aforementioned attendance statistics and the educational staff were Albanians. In the final decades of the 19th century, the city of Monastir, as one of the primary urban centers of the Vilayet of Monastir, possessed numerous schools spanning various educational levels.

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