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THE OTTOMAN THEATRE IN SKOPJE¹

Abstract. – The object of this study is the establishment of the Skopje Ottoman Theatre in 1906, an event not even many people of Skopje know about. At the beginning of the 20th century, at a time when the power of the Ottoman government was weakening, Mahmut Şevket Paşa was appointed governor of Skopje. Together with a few select intellectuals, the Paşa built a theatre. At that time, the theatre, its building, its design, as well as theatrical concepts, all represented a novel introduction of Westernisation to city life. Considering the rate of literacy of the period and believing that a theatre could be used as an effective means of communication for societal and cultural change, the bureaucratic elite initiated the foundation of the Ottoman theatre. The capacity of the theatre was 700 people. It was made with limited funds, so that there were no unnecessary decorations; it was a traditional wooden structure, representative of its time, yet also a modern building. There are no similar buildings of that category known to have been built in the Empire at that time. When the Skopje theatre started functioning in 1906, it hosted performances of various travelling groups and of schools in the area, as well as choir concerts and film viewings. Because the audience floor was level, the theatre was also used to hold balls and various special functions of foreign consulates. Plays by well-known Istanbul troupes such as Minakyan, Seferiyan and Ahmet Fehmi, writers like Şemsettin Sami Bey, and famous actor Burhaneddin Bey were put on. The pupils of the Skopje High School performed Namık Kemal's "Fatherland", a play that had previously been banned for a long time. With the support of the central Ottoman administration and with longterm vision, the Turks living in Macedonia

¹ This is a translation of the article *Üsküp'te Osmanlı Tiyatrosu (Ottoman Theatre in Skopje)*, published in 2015 (Bektaş, 2015, s. 78-83).

created a theatre that allowed Turks, Macedonians and other peoples to come together and interact, without discrimination and regardless of social and cultural status.

Key words. – Skopje, Theatre, Ottoman Empire.

The early 20th century was a time when the control of the Ottoman state over the region of Macedonia was waning. A combination of internal uprisings and separatist groups backed by foreign powers was creating a precarious situation in the region. In 1903, the Ottoman state was forced to accept the Münster Agreement, a reform programme drawn up by Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the aim of ensuring security of life and property. As a result of this agreement, certain regions of Macedonia were placed under the surveillance of foreign states, with the city of Skopje being appointed to the Austro-Hungarian gendarme battalion. This situation continued until the declaration of the Ottoman Empire's Second Constitutional Period (*İkinci Meşrutiyet*) in 1908.²

A look at the Ottoman budgets paints a clear picture of the social, political and economic situation of the time. According to data for the 1887-1888 financial year, half of the budget spending went to the military (50.90%) and one-quarter to the payment of debts (25.00%). For the period 1905-1906, however, military spending fell (36.20%), while debt repayments rose (32.60%). The most significant increase in budget spending during this period can be seen in the field of social security, the budget allocation for which was just 0.9% in the 1887-1888 financial year, rising to 3.40% in 1905-1906. Spending on education (culture, arts) was 0.5% in the 1887-1888 financial year, and fell to 0.1% in 1905-1906. The fact that between 1905 and 1906 approximately two-fifths of revenues went to the repayment of debts shows that the state was undergoing an economic crisis at the time.³

To counter this situation, a number of initiatives were launched that relied on collective solidarity, donations and local resources, and, to use İlber Ortaylı's term, "drudgery-esque" (*angaryamsı*) services.⁴

It was against such a backdrop that, in 1905, Mahmut Şevket Pasha⁵ was promoted to First General (*birinci feriklik*) and appointed as governor of

² Özbek, 2004, p. 83.

³ Güran, 2003, p. 14.

⁴ Ortaylı, 2007, p. 81.

the Kosovo Vilayet,⁶ settling in Skopje, the capital of the vilayet. Mahmut Şevket Pasha remained in the city for 40 months, until 1908; he first took great care to study the environs and after a short while made it his priority to establish security in the area, setting out to battle the gangs of bandits.⁷

Mahmut Şevket Pasha later worked towards the modernisation of the city of Skopje. He was instrumental in the building of an iron bridge that aimed to establish relations between the areas of the city on either bank of the Vardar River, and in the opening of a wide boulevard⁸ (see *Figure 1*). The introduction of contemporary lighting and water distribution systems, the launch of the first horse-drawn tramway, and the establishment of a sanitation programme that directly affected the health of the city's residents were among the successes of Mahmut Şevket Pasha's governorship.⁹

The subject of this article, the completion and establishment of the first Skopje Ottoman Theatre, was also an initiative of Mehmet Şevket Pasha. During that difficult period, his initiatives were supported by a number of Skopje's leading intellectuals, in particular the teachers Hasan Şükrü¹⁰ and Ferit Bayram¹¹ as well as Hasan Rıza Soyak, who would later become Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's principal clerk and then general secretary. These intellectuals were the founders of the Young Turks club "*Şübban-ı Vatan*" (Youth of the Nation) in Skopje, which was established with the aim of providing financial support for the education of talented young students.¹² These intellectuals would continue to invest great effort in the development of the fields of culture and education in the city. They took charge of the management of the theatre and devoted themselves to putting on plays and film screenings. The profits were used for the establishment of the *Mekteb-i Edeb* school for the education of poor children (Muslim and Christian) and this group of young intellectuals, having themselves completed the *Idadi* high school, took charge of the school's financial management.¹³

⁵ In 1891, Mahmud Şevket Pasha was sent to Germany for five years for weapons training. He wrote books and produced translations on various topics (Bardakçı, 2014, p. 10.).

⁶ Bardakçı, 2014, p. 10.

⁷ Şakir, 2011, p. 65

⁸ Bogoyević, 2008, p. 403.

⁹ Pavlovski, 2004, p. 86, 93, 103.

¹⁰ Hasan Şükrü was also a founder of a newspaper and is the grandfather of the author of this article.

¹¹ The first person to translate Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto into Turkish (Seyfullah, 1978, p. 23-37).

¹² Pavlovski, *ibid.*, p.100.

¹³ Süleyman, p. 71-72; Pavlovski, *ibid.*, p.104.

During that period the theatre, its building, form and theatrical concepts, were new Western ideas introduced to the life of the city.¹⁴ The success of theatre as a vehicle not only for entertainment but also for public education led Ottoman intellectuals to take an interest in this artform. Given the literacy levels of the time, the bureaucratic elite realised that literature or the print press alone would not be enough to bring the reforms to the public, in other words to modernize society. They therefore believed that theatre could be an effective tool of communication for social and cultural change, and spearheaded the establishment of the Ottoman Theatre.¹⁵



Figure 1. A 19th century map of Skopje, annotated by the author (Bogoyevič, 2008)

1. Stone Bridge, 2. Vardar River, 3. Fortress, 4. Serava Stream, 5. Karşıyaka (Opposite Bank),
6. Station Road, 7. Railway Station Building, 8. Immigrants Quarter,
9. M. Şevket Pasha Iron Bridge, 10. New boulevard, 11. Old bazaar area,
12. Jewish Quarter, 13. Ada Coffeehouse (Boges), 14. Theatre.

THE CITY OF SKOPJE

The city of Skopje is situated on the two banks of the Vardar River. In the centre of the city stands a stone bridge from the Ottoman period, the city's most important architectural structure. The old city is located on the left

¹⁴ Batur, 1985, p. 1066.

¹⁵ Koçak, 2011, p.292

bank of the Vardar River, in relation to the flow of the river to the south.¹⁶ It was established in the valley of the Serava Stream, between the fortress and the Gazi Baba Hill.¹⁷ On the right bank of the river, known as *Karşıyaka*¹⁸ (Opposite Bank), is found the 19th century railway and the immigrants quarter. This bank, which was previously dominated by gardens, cemeteries and a few old neighbourhoods, underwent significant changes with the arrival of the railway and the growth of the immigrants quarter.¹⁹

The population of Skopje stood at approximately 35,000 in 1898, but grew steadily with the arrival of immigrants from lands lost by the Ottoman Empire. The city housed the consulates of Russia, Britain, Austro-Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. According to Stefanovski, the number of residents of Skopje during the early 20th century, including locals and immigrants, stood at 50,000.²⁰

PERFORMANCES IN THE CITY BEFORE THE THEATRE

Turks who settled in Macedonia brought with them their own traditional forms of theatre: in particular, *Meddah* storytelling and *Karagöz* puppetry. A number of *Karagöz* theatres are known to have existed in Skopje alone. These traditional forms of theatre were performed in coffeehouses frequented by Turks. Another form of theatre that attracted the attention of the Macedonian public was the traditional *orta oyunu*. Tent theatre companies came from Western Europe that performed at fairs, contributing to the cultural wealth of Macedonia in the first half of the 19th century.²¹

Metin And states that the Turkish *Karagöz* theatre also had an influence in Balkan countries, and was particularly performed for Turkish audiences.²²

In 1897, a notable Armenian theatre company called *Boges*²³ came to perform in Skopje, holding their performances in the coffeehouse section of the Skopje City Hall, located in the Jewish quarter, between the Vardar River

¹⁶ Bogoyevič, *ibid.*, p. 388.

¹⁷ Hoca, 1993, p. 123.

¹⁸ Until the 19th century, the name Üsküp (Skopje) referred to the old town on the left bank of the river. The right bank was referred to as the "*Karşıyaka*" or "Opposite bank". (Gorgiev, 2011, p. 496).

¹⁹ Nedeljković, 1928, p. 7.

²⁰ Stefanovski, 2009, p. 8.

²¹ Pars, 2011, p. 11.

²² And, 2014, p. 44-45.

²³ Pars uses the name "Borges" instead of "Boges" (Pars, *ibid.*, p.11).

and the fortress. This theatre company was enthusiastically received by the public and they later also performed in the *Ada* Coffeehouse by the bank of the Vardar River. Over time, this area became known as the “Boges Theatre”.

The Boges performances were made up of songs dance, plays, short sketches and the indispensable *Karagöz* puppet show. Over time, the number of travelling theatre groups from other countries visiting Skopje increased and the need for a theatre in the city arose.²⁴

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THEATRE

The municipality of Skopje was established in 1869 and governed by a council made up of Muslim and non-Muslim members.²⁵ However, since certain duties such as taking decisions on building construction were not fulfilled for a variety of reasons, in practice it was central government bodies that took charge of such issues. The municipality therefore regularly appealed to the central bureaucracy for help.²⁶

In order to be able to respond to applications by foreign citizens wanting to stage plays, the government built a makeshift building on behalf of the municipality that foreign theatre companies applying to stage performances could hire out. Occasionally, the theatre companies that came to Skopje were subjected to monitoring and checks.²⁷

Given the circumstances, the Skopje council expressed the desire to construct a theatre, at an estimated cost of 90 thousand *kuruş*.²⁸ The grand vizier believed that it would be useful to receive the advice of British and Italian consultants regarding the construction of the building. However, the sum required for the construction of the theatre was found to be high given that there were many other things that could be done to serve the urban development and needs of the city. As such, a request was made to the Rumeli Inspectorate to provide justifications for the construction of a theatre as well as detailed information on the number of public services, such as roads, aqueducts and bridges during the period.²⁹ According to the response of the In-

²⁴ Stefanovski, *ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁵ Kirjazovski, 1971, p. 187-193.

²⁶ Ortaylı, 1992, p. 400-401.

²⁷ Ünlü, 2012, p. 176.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 176.

²⁹ BOA. BEO. Nr. 2937/220243; Ünlü, *ibid.*, p. 176.

spectorate, construction of the theatre began in the period of Vali Şakir Pasha, and was completed in the period of Mahmut Şevket Pasha (see Figure 2).³⁰

According to an article published in a Bulgarian newspaper, the idea to build a theatre came from a few young university-educated Turkish intellectuals, including the military inspector İzzet Bey.³¹

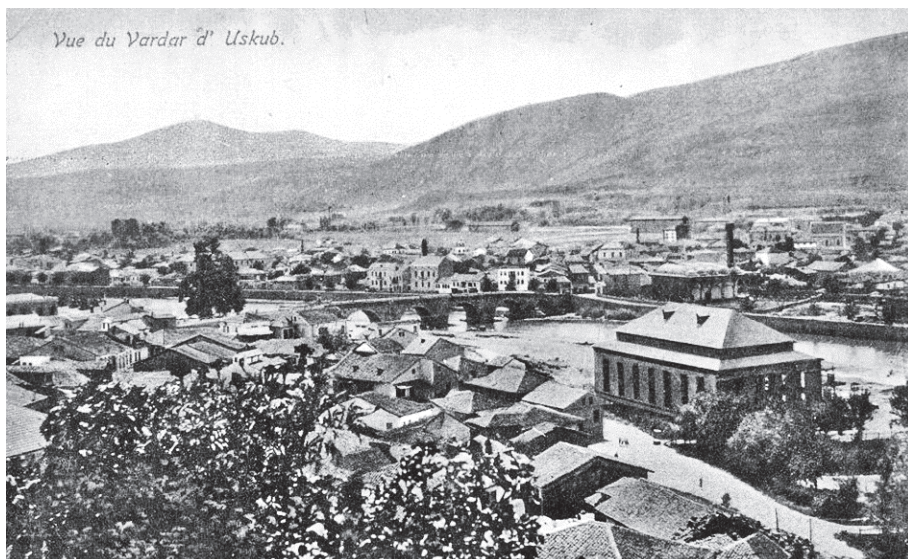


Figure 2. An old postcard showing Skopje and the theatre (Mimar.ist, 2015, s.79)

LOCATION OF THE THEATRE

The theatre was located very close to the site where theatre performances had previously taken place: Immediately next to the *Ada* Coffeehouse, by the banks of the Vardar River, on the same side as the old city, below the fortress, next to the Jewish quarter. An examination of the map and site plan in the state archives shows that the theatre was very close to the Stone Bridge that connected the two banks of the river, the busiest area of the city (see Figure 3, Figure 4).

The theatre was in an easily accessible location on the bank of the Vardar River, where promenades had been built and lighting installed. Imme-

³⁰ Ünlü, *ibid.*, p. 176.

³¹ <http://www.turktiyatrosu.mk/tr/ml-kurum-trk-tyatrosunun-kurulu-tarhes/> (official website of the Skopje Turkish Theatre).

diately next to the theatre stood a wooden bridge (Ago Pasha Bridge) that connected the two banks from different points to the Stone Bridge. This bridge offered easy access to the theatre from the various neighbourhoods of *Karşı-yaka* as well as the boarding school that was attended by a large number of students, the vocational training school, and the newly established large park located there.

SITE PLAN

The theatre building measured 20 metres in width, 37 metres in length and 14.5 metres in height. Given the large size of the building, the authorities demanded that it be divided into two—with one section used as a theatre, and the other as a hotel—and that a *gazino* (dining venue/concert hall) be added to the building. Since the Vardar River was prone to occasional flooding, there was concern that the building could be damaged and a promenade was built in front of and next to the theatre, and approval was given for a coffeehouse and *gazino* to be established on the newly created area. Together with the coffeehouse and *gazino*, the construction of the theatre cost 4000 lira, and it was estimated that it would bring in an annual revenue to the municipality of 487.50 lira. The local authorities provided this information to the central government, who found it to be convincing.³²

The theatre built by the Skopje municipality was formed of a large rectangular hall and a big stage. From the entrance hall at the front of the theatre, a set of stairs led to the gallery and the entrance to the theatre hall with a level floor. The rectangular hall was surrounded by a gallery; this can also be understood from the fact that the gallery flooring can be seen through the windows when the building is viewed from outside. Boxes for female audience members were made of latticed wood. Offices were built on either side of the large stage. The stage was adorned with a range of decorative features specially produced in Germany.³³ Another source mentions that the theatre was formed of stalls and two galleries.³⁴

In front of the theatre was a landscaped garden and elaborate *şadırvan* (water tank with fountain). The wooden divan-style benches set up around the *şadırvan* offered a place for theatre-goers to sit and talk and sip on their coffee. This monumental structure is considered the only modern theatre to have

³² Ünlü, *ibid.*, p. 177.

³³ Stefanovski, *ibid.*, p. 8; Süleyman, *ibid.*, p. 70.

³⁴ Stefanovski, 1990, p. 53.

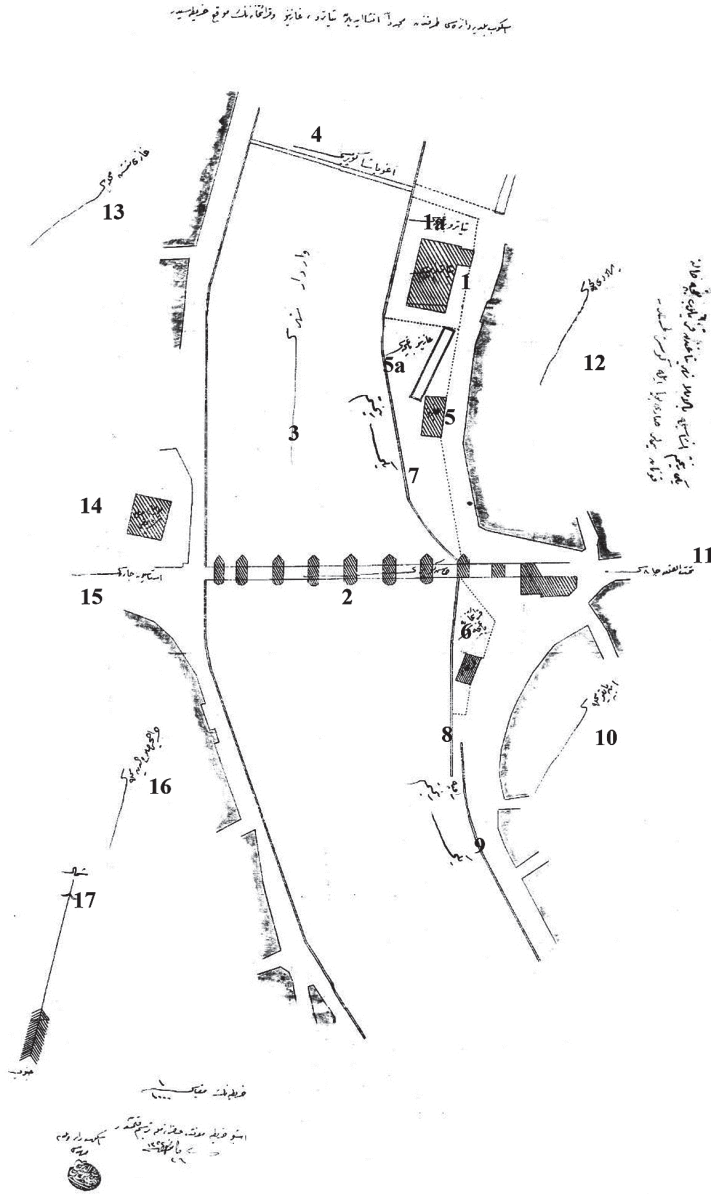


Figure 3. A 1/1000 scale site plan showing the theatre, gazino and coffeehouse built by the Skopje City Hall, drawn by Ali Zühdi bin Şemseddin on 26 Kanunuevvel 1322 (8 January 1907) (BOA.BEO.2955/221594): 1. Theatre House, 1a. Theatre Garden, 2. Stone Bridge, 3. Vardar River, 4. Ago Pasha Bridge, 5. Gazino, 5a. Gazino Garden, 6. Coffeehouse and garden, 7. New promenade, 8. Slipway, 9. New promenade, 10. İbn-i Payko Neighbourhood, 11. Tahte'l-kal'a Street, 12. Jewish Neighbourhood, 13. Gazi Menteş Neighbourhood, 14. Burmalı Mosque 15. Station Road, 16. Haraççı Selahaddin Neighbourhood, 17. North arrow.

been built in the Ottoman Empire during that period,³⁵ and the theatre is believed to have had a capacity of 700.³⁶ A photograph taken at the time of construction shows that the theatre was built using the lath and plaster technique over a wooden frame.

Speaking of the building, Süleyman Hüseyin said, "The theatre was made of timber and was extremely large and ornate."³⁷

Gita Predić, daughter of the playwright Branislav Nušić,³⁸ wrote about the theatre in a 1957 article published in Skopje's *Nova Makedonija*: "Although the theatre was built with light construction tools and was mostly made of wood, the overall appearance of the building was magnificent and its audience capacity was higher³⁹ than that of the Belgrade National Theatre."⁴⁰

The building was illuminated with oil lamps and heated with wood burners, with extra heat being provided by braziers on cold days. The audience would take advantage of this, and sit cross-legged by the braziers, brewing their coffee.⁴¹

The buildings were well thought of and requests to rent them out started to come in. Some offered to pay 400 lira in annual rent. Therefore after a few years, it would be possible for the municipality to recuperate the 4,000 lira spent on the theatre.⁴²

From 1912, when the Ottomans left the country, until the fire that broke out on 3 February 1914, the theatre was run by the new Serbian administration. The theatre was completely destroyed in the fire, and in 1927 the Serbian administration built in its place⁴³ a neoclassical theatre⁴⁴ of the same size and in the same location. This new theatre continued to operate until the Skopje earthquake in 1963. The theatre was destroyed in the earthquake and in 2013 a new theatre in the same style (a copy of the old theatre) was built. This theatre continues to be used today.⁴⁵

³⁵ Stefanovski, 2009, p. 8.

³⁶ Pavlovski, *ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁷ Süleyman, *ibid.*, p. 70.

³⁸ A famous Serbian comedy writer. In 193 Nušić worked as director of the Skopje Theatre (Stefanovski, 1990, p. 82; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Branislav_Nu%C5%A1i%C4%87).

³⁹ The old Belgrade National Theatre had a capacity of 800 (<http://www.narodnopoistorije.rs>).

⁴⁰ Stefanovski, *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴¹ Stefanovski, 2009, p.8

⁴² Ünlü, *ibid.*, p. 176.

⁴³ Stefanovski, 1990, p. 73.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁵ www.mnt.mk (Makedon Halk Tiyatrosu'nun internet adresi).



Figure 4. An old postcard showing a view of the theatre on the bank of the Vardar (Mimar.ist, 2015, s.81).

THEATRE EVENTS

Metin And divides Ottoman theatre into two periods, based on the political and constitutional changes introduced by the Ottoman administration: The *Tanzimat* theatre (1839-1908) and the Second Constitutional theatre (1908 onwards). During the *Tanzimat* period, theatrical events came to a standstill due to the strict control of Abdülhamid II, and in parallel with this the art of playwriting did not develop. In the second period however, in the first weeks after the *Hürriyet İlanı* (Declaration of Freedom) that announced the beginning of the Second Constitutional Period, there was a revival of theatrical events emerged and writers began to produce new plays at a dizzying pace.⁴⁶

A look at the events held at the Skopje Theatre seems to support Metin And's classification.

The Skopje Theatre was opened in 1906. At first it was the venue for travelling theatre companies, performances of schools throughout Skopje, and choir concerts or film screenings. Since the theatre hall had a level floor, it was also used to hold balls and various high-level ceremonies organised by foreign consulates in Skopje. There is also mention of performances of operas from Europe.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ And, 1985, p. 1608.

⁴⁷ Stefanovski, 2009, p. 8.

In 1906/7 the theatre was rented out by the municipality to theatre companies from Istanbul and Thessaloniki, who generally staged comedies. During that period, the well-known Minakyan and Seferiyan theatre companies from Istanbul put on plays that had been translated from French and staged the play “Altın İğne” [Golden Needle] for the first time.⁴⁸

After the *Hürriyet İlanı*, the *Şübban-ı Vatan* group put on the Namık Kemal play “Vatan yahut Silistre” (Motherland, or Silistra) with a group of high-school students.⁴⁹

The stage décor was made up of Namık Kemal’s portrait placed between two paintings of antique objects. The theatre was filled with Turkish theatregoers. Before the play began, the military orchestra played the “*Hürriyet Marşı*” (March of Freedom) instead of the “*Hamidiye Marşı*” (March of Abdülhamid) for the first time. The curtain rose, to a female student on the stage, dressed in white with a Turkish flag in one hand and a sword in the other. In the second scene, all the actors formed a circle around the portrait of the Namık Kemal, and a short speech about the playwright was given. The play was watched by the audience with great interest, and they gave an extended standing ovation and called out slogans. Even though the play was performed by amateur actors, this was the first time a play about nationalism had been performed and the performance was very successful.⁵⁰ The profit from the play (240 Ottoman gold coins) was used for education.⁵¹ After that period, the theatre became known as the *Şübban-ı Vatan* City Theatre.⁵²

On 12 September 1908, an article about the play in the 144th edition of the *Veçerna Pošta* (Evening Post) said that it was watched by “the consuls of Britain, Austria, Russia, Greece and Serbia, as well as high-level representatives of the European colonial community—the Austrian gendarmes and officers, Turkish civil servants and high-level politicians.”⁵³

The success of the play “Vatan yahut Silistre” served to encourage the young entrepreneurs, and they invited Burhaneddin Bey, a famous dramatic actor of the time, to come and perform. Burhaneddin Bey accepted the invitation and staged the plays “Napoleon Bonaparte”, “Nasıl Oldu” (How Did It

⁴⁸ Süleyman, *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁵⁰ Stefanovski, *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵¹ Süleyman, *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁵² Stefanovski, *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 9.

Happen), “Genç Osman” (The Young Osman), and “Türk”, with a group of young actors.⁵⁴

In the month of Ramadan of 1908, the Ahmet Fehmi Theatre Company came from Istanbul to perform at the theatre.⁵⁵

At the end of the same year, Şemsettin Sami Bey’s play “Besa” was performed to great acclaim.⁵⁶ Following the *Hürriyet İlanı* such performances and plays brought richness and variety not only to the city’s theatrical events but also to its cultural and artistic life in general: film screenings, performances by the Vardar Choir, high-school celebrations, visits from actors from the national theatres of Belgrade and Sofia, performances by the Voydan Chernodrinski theatre group, plays by travelling theatre companies, circus performances, *Karagöz* shows...⁵⁷

Hüseyin Süleyman writes that towards the end of the Ottoman reign, fanatical religious leaders began to speak out against the theatre performances of the *Şübban-ı Vatan* club. Süleyman states that some members of the public, influenced by these leaders, saw theatre as immoral and did not approve of such performances.⁵⁸

According to an article published in the *Vardar* newspaper on 19 May 1911, the famous journalist and publisher Ethem Ruhi (Balkan) gave a talk at the Municipal Theatre about domestic and foreign policy.⁵⁹

In summary, this article aims to show that the Skopje Theatre was important in that it offered a space for the Turks living in Macedonia to come together, enabling them to interact without regard for social and cultural status and to develop a communal national sentiment.⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the 20th century, a time when the rule of the Ottoman Empire was waning, the theatre established by Turks living in Macedonia with the support of the central Ottoman administration was important in that it created a space in which Turks, Macedonians and others could come

⁵⁴ Süleyman, *ibid.*, p. 72; Stefanovski, 2009, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Sevensil, 1968, p. 19.

⁵⁶ Stefanovski, *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ Süleyman, *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁵⁹ Stefanovski, *ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 8.

together and interact without discrimination and regardless of social and cultural status. In the establishment of this theatre, the city's intellectual elite enabled the inclusion of the public in the process of modernization and the creation of an integrated city culture.

The process of establishing the Skopje Theatre can be seen by examining the communication between the local authorities and the central government and the site plan drawn up by the municipality. Even though urban planning laws gave the municipality the power to make decisions on construction, in the example of Skopje we can see that the practical implementation of such plans was carried out by the organs of the central administration.

The Skopje Theatre was established not as a result of orders from above but to meet a need. The theatre was built with limited finances and using the lath and plaster technique over a wooden frame, and, due to the circumstances of the time, the design of the theatre avoided the use of unnecessary ornamentation and was plain in appearance. There are no other examples of similar structures built in the Ottoman Empire up to that time.⁶¹

However, the form of the roof, the quality of construction and the decorative features that were produced in Germany especially for the theatre (at that time there was an Austro-Hungarian battalion in Skopje), raises the question of whether or not certain Western characteristics were used in the construction. Unfortunately there is not enough evidence to provide a clear answer to such questions.

Other than the divan-style seating in the garden and the braziers in the theatre around which people would sit cross-legged, the use of European-style seating shows that traditional and modern elements were used side by side.

The new spatial function of the theatre and the new forms of behaviour that developed in it, along with the variety of plays performed in the theatre and also of the objects used all serve as proof of the inevitable changes to life in Skopje.

⁶¹ Most theatres built in Istanbul, Bursa and Thessaloniki during the 19th century were neo-classical in style.

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