

THE HISTORY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AT SHKODRA REGION: MEKTEPS

The wide spread of Islam among Albanians occurred first and foremost in the cities. After they settled on Albanian cities, they began functioning as administrative, economic and cultural centers of a new political system. Adapting to their social-economic role, those cities attracted not only administrative and military personnel, but also missionaries, clerics, scholars, and Islamic preachers. First, they came from abroad and later on they build up and multiplied together with cult institutions.

The increase of Muslim population, brought about a mosque almost in every neighborhood. It became a habit of building at the city or village center mosques, tekke, mekteps, which were associated with building cultural-educational campuses, at their services. They went on building fountains, wells, hammams, as a sign of charity and generosity. Priority were given on building religious cultural-educational institutions such as mekteps and madrasas. The network of schools increased parallel with the awakening of national conscience. Documents show that during 1894-95 there were 105 such schools in the city and villages around, 75 of old system and 26 of the new system. At the mekteps children learned elementary theory and practice about Islam. Things like how to behave inside the family and the society as well as other educational lessons worth mentioning.

At the Old Bazaar, mekteps stayed open until 1910, time which the trade went into decline. Reason for that was because of the trade expanding into the city center and children already were being taught at the mekteps near their neighborhoods. In the last years of their existence advanced teaching methods were applied, obtained by religious teachers. It helped all those boys which finished mekteps and wanted to advance their studies into madrasas of Shkodra and further more.