

THE OTTOMAN PRESS AS A SOURCE FOR THE HISTORY OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN WESTERN RUMELIA: THE NEWSPAPER „TUNA GAZETESI/DUNAV” (1865–1878)^{2*}

Summary

The paper presents the classification of the news published in the Ottoman newspaper „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” from all aspects of everyday life in the counties of the Niš and Pirot Sancaks. The fact that it was a media that was published continuously for over ten years makes this newspaper one of the primary sources for researching the history of events and everyday life in Niš, Pirot, Leskovac, Prokuplje, Kuršumlja, Bela Palanka and Znepolje during the last years of Ottoman rule in these areas in the 19th century.

Key words: Ottoman Empire, Balkans, 19th century, printing, Sancak of Niš, Sancak of Pirot.

INTRODUCTION

Although book printing in the Ottoman Empire is documented as early as the 15th century, newspapers as periodicals do not appear until the end of the 18th century. By the end of the 19th century, late Ottoman, i.e. early Turkish journalism had already been formed as a system of about fifty editorial offices with different spheres of interest and lifespan. Many of these media were created at the initiative of Europeans settled in the Ottoman Empire, as informants about the movement of capital, traffic and major political events. However, some editorial offices were also founded by domestic enthusiasts during the Tanzimat (1839–1876), Ottoman intellectuals who recognized the need to inform the population of the Empire about the state of the country and the achievements of the modern world, thereby encouraging the formation of a thoughtful, informed Ottoman society. Of the latter, the newspapers directly supported by the Ottoman state lasted the longest.

One of the most significant trademarks of the rapid development of Ottoman press in the 19th century is regional journalism. Regional journalism not only made local communities known to readers throughout the Ottoman Empire, but also helped to more directly observe the situations

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that these communities went through, identify common problems (and therefore solutions), and also learn about regional differences. All of these aspects were most often permeated by the political narrative dictated by the State, which directly affected the longevity of the media. One of the newspapers that was most successful in fitting into the format we have described was the bilingual newspaper „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”.

„TUNA GAZETESI/DUNAV”

The founding of this newspaper is directly related to the reform by which the Ottoman state was administratively and territorially divided into vilayets during 1860s. The first of the vilayets, a pilot project, was the Danube vilayet, which was established on October 8, 1864. The Danube vilayet consisted of the sancaks of Niš, Vidin and Silistria, and was headed by Ahmed Midhat Pasha, a man who had been the governor of the Niš sancak before that (Randelović, 2022: 124, 372). In the Regulations for the Danube Vilayet, point 9, in addition to correspondence between the capital and the vilayet headquarters (Ruščuk), also referred to the issue of the press in the Danube Vilayet (*Loi constitutive*, 1865: 4). However, while still in Niš, the great reformer Midhat Pasha launched an initiative to ensure that the region under his management was covered by the press, as a public medium (1863). In this regard, he required from the State to be provided with lithography printing machine in Niš (BOA, A.MKT.MHM, 2653). Although he failed to do so from the position of the governor of Niš Sancak, a month after the establishment of the Danube Vilayet, the requested printing presses from the capital arrived at the Vilayet headquarters in Ruščuk. Shortly thereafter, a Vilayet printing house was established there.

„Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” began on March 3, 1865, and was printed continuously until June 1, 1877. In the first year it was a weekly newspaper, published only on Wednesdays, but afterward it was twice a week (Wednesdays and Sundays) and it stayed like that till 1877. Since the editorial staff also comprised a large part of the staff of the Vilayet printing house, the work of these two institutions was inseparable. This was stopped by the Russo-Ottoman War (1877–1878), i.e. the attack of the Russian army on Ruščuk, during which the building of the printing house was hit by a shell and afterwards looted. Some of the undamaged machinery was then transferred to Sofia and used in 1881 to establish the Bulgarian State Printing House (İbrahimov, 2016: 89). This was the end of „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” newspaper. In the thirteen years that „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” existed, it published over 1,170 issues and about a dozen specials.

In form, „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” was a four-page bilingual newspaper, printed in Ottoman Turkish and Bulgarian. It consisted of four sections: Domestic News (reforms and activities of the Ottoman government), General Affairs (events in the Danube Vilayet), Foreign News and Advertisements/Announcements. The text in Ottoman and Bulgarian was mostly the same in Domestic News and General Affairs, however, in other sections there could be differences, especially in Advertisements/Announcements, since the target groups of the Bulgarian and Turkish readers were

different. In addition, a special series published in 1871–1872 after each Hijri month contained the Grand Vizier's decrees, laws, and criminal judgments, as well as a detailed description of the prosecuted offenses of various categories that occurred in the kazas of the Danube Vilayet.

The sources of direct information for „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” varied and were very rarely cited. However, it is taken into account that, according to the Regulations of the Danube Vilayet, they were taken from the offices in the sancaks which were responsible for collecting data for the State from subordinate kazas, local commercial courts, state officials of local administrations, monthly economic and regular reports (defters), data taken from reliable passers-by and merchants, especially when it came to news from Serbia and the Danubian principalities. In addition to this, the editorial staff was also taking news from other newspapers, domestic ones in Turkish and European languages, as well as from the newspapers published abroad. In cases where news was taken from other newspapers they were always properly cited as the primary source of information. Thus, in the columns „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”, the Ottoman newspapers „Tasvir-i Efkâr”, „Ceride-i Havâdis”, „Zembul”, „Mümeyyiz”, „Ceride-i Askeriyye”, „Tercüman-ı Ahvâl”, „Levant Herald”, „Journal de Constantinople”, „Courier d'Orient”, „Moniteur”, German „Gazette d'Ausburg”, British „Times”, French „Nouvelle Publique” and „Patrie”, American „New York Times”, Serbian „Napredak”, „Svetovid”, „Vidovdan”, „Zastava” and many others from near and far European and world regions are mentioned as primary sources of information.

Good editing, choice of topics and application of easy, everyday language made „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” reach 1,500 subscribers in the first year of publishing, along with another 500 or so occasional readers. Who were the readers, then? Judging by the subscribers, more than half of them were people from the Ottoman capital (800), about 100 copies went to subscribers in Serbia, the Danubian principalities and the editorial offices of other newspapers that relied on „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”. About 300 copies were ordered by officials of the Danube Vilayet administration, and about 400 copies were purchased by ordinary citizens (Koç, 2015: 126). Some copies were distributed free of charge to Muslim junior high schools (rüşdiyes), members of the high provincial administration and ulema (Çelik, 2007: 82). The orphanages (islahhanes) in the Danube province were probably getting the free copies, as well.

The people who made up its editorial staff, Turks and Bulgarians, were most responsible for the newspaper's rapid rise to prominence. They were all prominent members of the Ottoman provincial intelligentsia. Among the Turks, these were Yusuf Ziya Effendi, Selim Siri-bey (later Pasha) and Ahmed Midhat Effendi – the „father” of modern Turkish journalism. Among the Bulgarians, those were the translators Stoil Popov and Ivan Čorapdziev, as well as the technician and typesetter Nikola Effendi. However, the most significant figure in the Bulgarian section of the editorial staff was Dragan Tsankov, a publicist and leading ideologist of Bulgarian nationalism in the Ottoman Empire during 1860s and 1870s. His influence was clearly visible in the newspaper's narrative and the viewpoints it popularized.

As a state project, „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” had several goals. The primary one was to inform the people of the Danube Vilayet about the situation in the capital, the other provinces of the Empire, and the world. Therefore, although it was a provincial newspaper, it conveyed the official views of the Ottoman state. In this regard, „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” was a means to politically homogenize public opinion and shape it in a way that it would always lean towards state policy. Therefore, through the „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”, the unity of Muslims and non-Muslims in the province was promoted, as well as the liberal ideas and technological achievements from the West so it could foster the formation of a provincial intelligentsia and a unified civic class, regardless of religious and ethnic affiliation. Regarding the role of non-Muslims in this policy, the Ottoman state relied especially on the Bulgarians, the only Slavic Orthodox population which was recognized as a community (milet) and dwelt in the central regions of the Danube Vilayet.

The purpose of „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” to influence public opinion was closely related with the work of the vilayet printing house in Ruščuk. Until its establishment, Bulgarians printed or received church books and textbooks from Russia, Serbia and Austria. Especially when it came to Russia, there was a danger of inserting various subversive political materials among the imported books that could encourage nationalism among the Bulgarians and the idea of independence from the Ottoman Empire. With the launch of the vilayet printing house, the printing of textbooks for Bulgarians and the works of local Bulgarian authors began, which made the printing and procurement of books outside the Danube vilayet unnecessary. In parallel with the strategy that the Ottoman state promoted through „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”, the Bulgarian part of the editorial staff also had its own agenda. According to it, „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” was to serve Bulgarian national propaganda purposes at the expense of other Ottoman Slavs.

Under the influence of Dragan Tsankov and the exarchist climate in the editorial office, in „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” the entire Slavic population in the Danube Vilayet was presented exclusively as Bulgarian. This was taken to such an extreme that even Muslims were often presented with the suffix specific to Bulgarian surnames (Bekir Osmanov, Mehmed Salikhov, Sherif Abdulahov, Hussein Hasanov, etc.). The surnames of Tsincars and Greeks were retained with the Hellenic suffixes „-ki/-kis”, however, among them were also some who were mentioned as „Ivans”. As for the Serbs, the stand of „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” was such that their existence in Rumelia was completely denied, except in the case of persons from Serbia passing through it or staying there for a short time. Since the names and surnames of the native Serbs were translated into Bulgarian mechanically, it is easy to see in which cases the editorial staff intervened (Jova Milenkov from Prokuplje Kaza, for example). The newspaper also revealed its fabrications and interventions in other ways. For example, in the news from the western regions of Rumelia, the absence of typically Bulgarian names (Vasil, Vilko...) is striking, while the names are typical for the Serbs of the region (Stojan, Kole, Đoka, Đorđe, Kostadin). Also, for the areas west of Sofia reporters regularly had to *emphasize* the national identity of the

people they were writing about (...Bulgarian Stanko from Vranje, ...when one Bulgarian woman in Niš met another..., the Bulgarians there...), which indicates the actual distance of the editorial staff from these regions. However, when the reports refer to cities located in Bulgaria there is no emphasis on the national identity of the actors (Yordan Stefanov from Ruščuk, Todor Tsankov from Plevna, etc.). In general, the editorial staff (at least the Bulgarian part) harshly criticized Serbia's policy regarding rapprochement with the Bulgarians or the creation of any mutual cultural or political bridge (Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav, 19 May 1871, 2). The attitude of the newspaper towards Serbia was synchronized with the stands of Ottoman Empire, given that any confirmation of the Serbian presence in Rumelia meant for Constantinople the legalization of Serbia's claims to those areas. It especially referred to the Niš, Skopje and Prizren sancaks (i.e. the kazas of the later Kosovo Vilayet). The editorial staff was no less lenient towards the Greeks and their clergy, which actually had more to do with the struggle of the Exarchists and Phanariotes in the Ottoman capital. While in the case of Serbia „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” only reflected the official policy of Constantinople towards Serbia, the conflict with the Greeks was a direct result of the internal policy of the Porte to divide Ottoman Christian communities, as the foundation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 proved. However, the Exarchists at „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” kept in mind that the interests of the Ottoman state were still in the foreground. That is why, after the establishment of the Bulgarian Secret Committee in Bucharest (1866), they wrote negatively about this Bulgarian émigré organization since it worked on liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottomans with the support of Russia. Therefore, every incursion of the Committee bands into the Danube Vilayet, for the purpose of triggering anti-Ottoman uprising, was presented in a negative context.

In addition to commenting the events in a manner that suited the Ottoman state, „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” also acted as a propaganda outlet by dealing with foreign newspapers which criticized or negatively commented the internal policies of the Ottomans. It reacted same way when the activities of the Exarchy in Rumelia were criticized from abroad. In this regard, the columns of this newspaper occasionally pass over the news from Greek or Serbian newspapers (most often „Napredak” and „Svetovid”), and then comment on it in a way that challenges the original author's credibility or knowledge of the true information about the event he was writing about. In such cases „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” did not publish the reaction from that foreign newspaper on its response. That way it intentionally created the impression before the readers that in the certain media conflict „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” dominated, compromised the other side and suppressed it with facts. However, it did not hesitate to spread half-truths and disinformation itself when it was necessary for the interests of the Exarchists or the Ottoman state. This was especially noticeable during the period of the uprising in Herzegovina (1875) and the Serbian-Turkish Wars (1876–1878). However, over the years, „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” underwent changes in its narrative style, so two periods are noticeable. From its founding until 1872, the texts were more descriptive and politically subjective, while after that

the narrative becomes informatively sterile, which is already reminiscent of a modern journalistic style. This indicates a certain professional maturation of the newspaper, but also the possible changes that have occurred in its editorial staff in the meantime.

WESTERN RUMELIA IN „TUNA GAZETESI/DUNAV”

Although Rumelia technically refers to the entire European part of the Ottoman Empire, in 19th-century historiography this name referred to the areas of present-day Greece, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Albania and the southern part of Serbia with Kosovo. Therefore, its western part facing Principality of Serbia consisted of the areas west of Sofia, grouped from 1835 to 1877 in Niš, and from 2 January 1877 in the Niš and Pirot Sancaks. These are the kazas of Prokuplje (with the nahiya of Kuršumlja), Pirot (with the nahiya of Bela Palanka), Niš, Leskovac, Vranje and Znepolje. Due to the circumstances resulting from the wars of the Ottoman Empire with Serbia and Russia (1876–1877), an administrative reorganization of this area took place. The Pirot Sancak was established within the Sofia Vilayet, consisting of units separated from the Niš and Sofia Sancaks. Znepolje, Pirot and Bela Palanka are taken from Niš Sancak, and the kaza of Breznik and the nahiya of Sar-Yurt were from the Sofia Sancak (Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav, January 2, 1877, 2263).

This administrative organization did not correspond to the way in which news from these areas was arranged in the „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”. While Kuršumlja is always mentioned in the reports about the Prokuplje kaza, news related to Bela Palanka are listed with reports concerning Niš, not Pirot. Most often, the subsection in Domestic News usually bore the name of a specific sancak of the Danube Vilayet, and then, sometimes in order and sometimes mixed, news from the kazas and nahiyas from that sancak were listed. Since 1866, the regional division of news in „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” was listed under the title „Reports from...” (Дописка отъ...), from August 11, 1874, „They report from...” (Пишжтъ отъ...), already in September of the same year the title was changed to „Mutesarifiḳs” (Мютесарифѣлицитѣ), and from the summer of 1875 it was returned to „They report from...”, with the obligatory insertion of the name of the specific sancak of the Danube Vilayet. The form of the news was also variable. Sometimes they were unusually long and descriptive, and sometimes only short, affirmative forms. When it comes to Western Rumelia (until January 1877, the Niš Sancak), there is a break in publishing news from it. The reason for this is the fact that from 1871 to 1874, this sancak was annexed to the Prizren Vilayet, and then briefly to the Novi Pazar Vilayet, only to be finally integrated back into the Danube Vilayet (Randelović, 2022: 130–131). During this period, there is almost no news from the Niš Sancak in the „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”, except when it comes to appointments of high officials or indirect information. In June 1876, another reorganization of Western Rumelia took place, when the Niš and Sofia Sancaks were separated from the Danube Vilayet in order to establish a separate Sofia Vilayet (Randelović, 2022: 131). However, as the war followed, although it was nominally not part of the Danube Vilayet,

Western Rumelia was still written about in this newspaper due to current events on the front against Serbia.

Although there are sections in „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” where news are grouped, we have grouped them internally according to their relevance.

The first group consists of economic news, which includes: information on the organization of local markets and fairs, the establishment of various special-purpose funds (chests), the discovery and exploitation of ores, the opening of new road routes, the work of the transport company of the Niš Sancak, the establishment of factories, the purchase of agricultural and other machinery from Europe, various economic statistics, news about the agricultural loan fund (menafi sandık), the purchase of livestock, the harvesting of tithes, reports on sowing and harvesting in the kazas, the return of the population that had fled to Serbia, etc. From this group, in the period 1865–1877, 65 news were documented for Niš and Bela Palanka, 19 for Pirot, 10 for Vranje, 7 for Leskovac, 5 for Znepolje and 7 for Prokuplje with Kuršumlja.

The second group consists of news about cases of minor bodily injury and non-fatal crimes, such as: defamation, prostitution, theft (robbing shops, warehouses and churches), fights, desertion, identity fraud to avoid military service or paid military service instead of a selected conscript, speculation and embezzlement by state officials, punishment of officials for negligence in their work, intentional poisoning of livestock, false testimony, capture of outlaws and escaped prisoners, cases of intentional and accidental arson, etc. According to statistics, there were 33 such news for Niš with Bela Palanka, 17 for Pirot, 5 for Vranje and Leskovac each, 4 for Znepolje, and 8 for Prokuplje with Kuršumlja.

The third group are news about cases of serious bodily harm, crimes resulting in death, and cases of violation of honor. These include: murders, intentional (by drowning, by firearm, by hanging) and fatal accidents (falls, overturning of a carriage, death under load, mountain landslides), injuries – attempted murders and self-inflicted injuries of civilians and soldiers, revolts against the state, deadly riots, public executions of criminals, cover-ups of murders, rapes and attempts to cover up rapes, infanticide, death in childbirth, and cases of sudden death and freezing. For Niš with Bela Palanka, 51 cases have been documented from this category, for Pirot 28, for Vranje 23, Leskovac 29, for Znepolje 3 and for Prokuplje with Kuršumlja 36. In this group, there are noticeable peculiarities in some of the kazas, so in Vranje, Leskovac and Niš there are frequent cases of suicide due to unhappy love or passion, and what is curious is that it was often among the married people as well as among the bachelors, regardless were they Christians or Muslims. On the other hand, the Prokuplje kaza is also specific due to its proximity to the border with Serbia and frequent border incidents, i.e. attempts by Arnauts and Circassians to invade Serbia to rob livestock, but also raids by outlaws from Serbia. „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” regularly presented such cases in a way that compromised the Serbian side, so gangs of Arnauts and Circassians were described as Arnaut or Circassian *children* or *boys* who *accidentally strayed* or *crossed the border out of ignorance*, where Serbian guards shot at them, wounding or killing

some. However, the newspaper also documented cases of actual incursions by Serbian and Montenegrin outlaws, who went to Kuršumlja and the Prokuplje kaza to plunder and take away Albanian herds, often killing shepherds and witnesses. In this regard, the Prokuplje region is also home to frequent cases of ambushes by outlaws from Serbia who intercepted Muslims or killed those they found isolated in the forests.

The fourth group consists of news about human and animal diseases, natural disasters and fires. These are reports about invasions of various insects and other pests, heavy snow and rain, low temperatures, earthquakes, high temperatures and drought, city fires, livestock diseases („treska”, „sipanica”, „čirevi” and „šuga”), dysentery and cholera, mass deaths, hail and crop damage, river overflows, strong winds, the opening of quarantines or the isolation of certain settlements due to epidemics. According to statistics, there are 48 such news for Niš with Bela Palanka, 22 for Pirot, 13 for Vranje, 12 for Leskovac, 17 for Znepolje and 16 for Prokuplje with Kuršumlja. This group is particularly valuable for researchers who study the toponymy of the region, since the names of villages and places are regularly mentioned in these news. In addition, data on health and weather conditions are useful for researchers who study the microclimate of a particular place in the southern part of Serbia, and the demography and health picture of the population that inhabits it.

The fifth group is news about the administrative movements of civil and military officers, as well as military matters in the broadest sense. These include: appointments of officers, their transfers and services, decorations for merit, military exercises, engagement of military units in fortification works, rotation of battalions, discharge of battalions after serving their term, military and civilian inspections, replenishment of weapons, deaths of prominent high-ranking officers, war operations in 1876–1878 (care of the wounded, replenishment of ammunition and units), transfers of high-ranking administrative officials (mutesariffs, muawins, naibs). This group of news is the most significant for researching movements in civil and military administration, and consists of 123 news for Niš with Bela Palanka, 31 news items for Pirot, 6 news items for Vranje, 8 for Leskovac, 5 for Znepolje and 15 for Prokuplje with Kuršumlja.

Public works and initiatives of local authorities constitute a special group of news, given that after the governorship of Midhat Pasha in Niš, a special standard was reached in the regulation and conduct of communal policy in the kazas that gravitated towards this city. In this regard, this group includes news about: the establishment or repair of hospitals, schools and other public buildings (telegraph, council offices and konaks), the establishment of various administrative councils, the construction of roads and bridges, the rehabilitation of the existing transport network, repairs to public fountains, the introduction of public lighting, the reception of engineers and surveyors from the capital for various construction projects, increasing the level of security (construction of guardhouses and watchtowers), etc. There were 31 news for Niš with Bela Palanka from this group, 11 for Pirot, 6 for Vranje, 4 for Leskovac and 5 for Prokuplje with Kuršumlja.

Social, i.e. public events are the main feature of the civil society that was in its infancy during the Tanzimat, and the news that „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” reported about them is significant for connecting life in the settlements of Western Rumelia with the social history of the Serbian New Territories after 1878. Such events include news about: public celebrations (of the birthdays of sultans and anniversaries of their accession to the throne, the birthdays of royal family members, the arrival of various state and religious officials in the city, as well as foreign diplomats), military parades, public fireworks, etc. There are 13 such news about Niš with Bela Palanka, while in other places there are no news about events from this group.

Private initiatives of citizens and various donations were recognized as a separate group, consisting of news about: voluntary departures to the army, donations to schools, collective donations to vulnerable persons in other parts of the Empire (Circassian and Tatar refugees from Crimea, muhajirs from Crete), collection of financial assistance for the purchase of weapons for the regular Nizam army, donations of money, land or movable property (horses and livestock, clothing and footwear) by private individuals for the common good (construction, expansion and renovation of public institutions, mosques, bridges). From this group 24 news were documented for Niš with Bela Palanka, 11 for Pirot, 9 for Vranje and Leskovac, and 3 for Znepolje.

Although small, educational opportunities constitute a particularly significant group, given that during the Tanzimat local administrations took this issue particularly seriously, and therefore this includes news about: the establishment of schools and initiatives related to schools, holding school celebrations and exams, the Islahanne in Niš, news about the success of outstanding students and their scholarship-based education in the Ottoman capital or Europe, marking final exams and charitable sunnah for Muslim students. For Niš and Bela Palanka there are 44 news from this group, for Prokuplje with Kuršumlija only 1, while for other places there is no news from this domain.

Finally, a special group was distinguished, consisting of public notes and miscellaneous, which mostly included news published in Announcements/Advertisements section at the end of each issue of „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”. These are news about: military obligations of reassigned soldiers, news about found and unidentified corpses, rescuing people from rivers or drifts, collection of various taxes (bedel, resums), news about cases of animal rabies, obscure news about the birth of deformed children and animals, an emergency call for food collection and aid for local garrisons, announcements about granting pensions to widows of meritorious officers, statistics of the sancak budget, announcements of bankruptcies and claims of business partners, various regulations on the work of public institutions, the arrival of various commissions from the capital, etc. For Niš and Bela Palanka 88 news from this group were documented, for Pirot 12, for Vranje 11, for Leskovac 10, for Znepolje 4 and for Prokuplje with Kuršumlija 12 news items.

Therefore, if we take into account that only a quarter of each issue of „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav” was dedicated to regional news, then the number of at least 992 news in 1180 issues of this newspaper represents a significant corpus of information for the region of Western Rumelia in the second half of the 19th century.

CONCLUSION

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Although they have existed since the Middle Ages, newspapers as a format have become a significant addition to primary sources used for historiographic purposes only since the 19th century. However, in all periods the most common problems with this type of serial publication have been instability in form and program, as well as bias, which has practically always been inseparable from newspapers. However, the (relative) technical ease with which numerous newspapers were launched made life in many regions more visible, and thus made it easier to follow social processes and phenomena outside the major European centers.

The official newspaper of the Danube Vilayet, „Tuna Gazetesi/Dunav”, is the most successful example of a provincial newspaper in the history of the late Ottoman state. Its good and responsible management was crucial in ensuring that the newspaper achieved a respectable longevity, which allows modern researchers to follow its perspective on social and political events in the regions in which this newspaper was interested. Therefore, if its political-propaganda narrative is ignored, it is a media that disseminated data with double values – direct, documenting the events it informed about, and indirect, describing the circumstances in which these events occurred. This is particularly important for research into parts of the Ottoman Empire such as Western Rumelia, due to the insight into the reaction of ethnically and religiously heterogeneous communities to the internal and foreign policy of the Ottoman state, the role that this region played in the process of its modernization (Tanzimat) and the course of the wars of 1876–1878, which had a fateful impact on the future of the Ottoman state. For the history of Serbia, which Western Rumelia encompassed until 1878, this newspaper is important because it makes it easier to observe cultural, political, economic and social differences in relation to the changes that Europeanization under the Obrenović dynasty brought here after 1878. The articles there also allow us to see the historical connections between two eras, which is particularly important for dealing with the institutions, customs, and ways of life that survived the changes of 1878.

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ОСМАНСКА ШТАМПА КАО ИЗВОР ЗА ИСТОРИЈУ СВАКОДНЕВИЦЕ У ЗАПАДНОЈ РУМЕЛИЈИ: ЛИСТ „TUNA GAZETESI/ ДУНАВЪ” (1865–1878)

Резиме

У раду је представљена класификација вести објављених у османским новинама „Tuna gazetesi/Дунавъ“ из свих аспеката свакодневног живота у казама и нахијама Нишког и Пиротског санџака. Чињеница да је реч о медију који је континуирано излазио преко десет година чини ове новине једним од примарних извора за истраживање историје догађаја и свакодневног живота у Нишу, Пироту, Лесковцу, Прокупљу, Куршумлији, Белој Паланци и Знепољу током последњих година османске владавине на овим подручјима у 19. веку.

Кључне речи: Османско царство, Балкан, 19. век, штампа, Нишки санџак, Пиротски санџак.