

HISTORIOGRAPHY BETWEEN THE LINES

The Ottoman Image in Macedonian
History Books



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History Books

Shener Bilalli



This book is dedicated to the loving memory of my father.

He always showed interest and vast knowledge in every phase of my work, and I am deeply grateful for having the opportunity to collaborate with him. He was an exemplary man who always supported me, sacrificed everything for me to reach my current position, encouraged me to study and love history, and was the guide, wisdom, and light of my life.

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Foreword

This book focuses on the history books used in the Republic of North Macedonia in the past. It provides a detailed examination of the information written about the “Ottoman State” in the history books and the “Ottoman Image “. The importance of this research lies in how the Ottoman Image elements that still exist in Macedonia create an Ottoman image in educational history books. The study of history is an intricate tapestry of perspectives, narratives, and interpretations, each thread contributing to our understanding of the past. Among these threads, the depiction of empires and their legacies plays a pivotal role in shaping national identities and collective memories. “The Ottoman Image in Macedonian History Books” delves into this rich and complex interplay, exploring how the centuries-long Ottoman presence is portrayed within the educational narratives of Macedonia. Macedonia, a land at the crossroads of civilizations, has experienced diverse cultural and political influences throughout its history. The Ottoman Empire, which ruled the region for over five

centuries, left an indelible mark on its social, cultural, and political fabric. This book seeks to uncover how this significant period is represented in Macedonian history textbooks, which are foundational in shaping young minds and national consciousness. Presenting history in an unbiased and balanced manner is fraught with challenges. Historians, educators, and policymakers must navigate a landscape of conflicting interpretations and political sensitivities. This book addresses these challenges head-on, offering a critical examination of how the Ottoman legacy is portrayed in Macedonian educational materials. It seeks to uncover both the overt and subtle messages conveyed to students and to consider the broader implications for intercultural understanding and historical reconciliation.

The book consists of four chapters. The first and second chapters provide an overview of institutional information about the research, the problem background and problem statement, the sub-problems, the purpose of the research, its importance, and relevant figures. The third section gives the findings and comments about the research. The last chapter contains the results and recommendations for further research.

Background of the Problem

The Ottoman Empire was a global empire that spanned across three continents and showed the world an example of an unmatched understanding of state administration and justice. It easily achieved the goals that even today's democracies fail to do. The Ottoman Empire succeeded in bringing together different religions, nationalities, and cultural and social dynamics under one umbrella, thus teaching the world a lesson of democracy and tolerance. The Ottoman Empire proved that all nations could live together despite their differences. Even though the Ottoman Empire no longer exists, the nations of the three continents it ruled for centuries always keep the Ottoman Empire alive in their memories. Attempts have been made to create a different image of the Ottoman Empire by intervening in these memories for various political reasons and remembering it not as it was but as it should be remembered.

The book aims to create a platform for an agreement among the new states from the old Ottoman geography. Our main