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Citation for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic Schools in

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MLA

Kulanić, Ahmed . "Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic Schools in." In *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*. Jan 26, 2015.

<<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t343/e0125>>.

Chicago

Kulanić, Ahmed . "Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic Schools in." In *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*,

<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t343/e0125> (accessed Jan 26, 2015).

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic Schools in

Islamic religious education in Bosnia-Herzegovina dates back to the Ottoman conquest of the fifteenth century. The new government established an Islamic education system that had the objective of educating new leaders, teachers, diplomats, administrators, bureaucrats, and judges of the Empire. Under the influence of Ottoman education models, three kinds of religious schools were founded: *Maktab* (elementary school), *Muallimhana* (lower secondary school) and *Madrasah* (secondary school).

Maktab

From the Arabic verb *kataba* which means "to write," the maktabas were originally built as a part of the local mosque. However, due to the increasing Muslim population, maktabas were also built as separate buildings next to or near the mosque. maktabas reflected the Ottoman style of architecture, and were similar to Ottoman residential houses. Names of the maktabas were usually decided by the founders (*waqifs*) of endowments, and the most common names included *bayt-al-'ilm* (house of knowledge), *bayt-at-ta'lim* and *dar-al-ta'lim* (both roughly translated as house of learning). During the Ottoman rule, more than one thousand male and female maktabas were flourishing.

Maktabas emphasized the skills of reading, writing, and basic religious education and upbringing. This religious education included Islamic dogma, rites, and ethics. The Arabic

language was often the main medium of teaching and learning. Teachers in the maktab were called *muallim*. Today, maktab are often used for the purposes of basic religious education which is organized under the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Muallimhana: Lower Secondary Schools

Muallimhana was an institution that provided a higher form of education, the purpose of which was to educate students who intended to work as teachers in the newly established maktab. A graduate of a muallimhana gained the title *muallim* (teacher). The first Muallimhana was built in Sarajevo in 1477 and was known as Ayyas-bey's Muallimhana. In this educational institution, the first imams and religious teachers were educated. In modern times, the muallimhana's role and purpose has been largely transferred to the *madrasah*.

Madrasahs: Secondary Schools

Madrasahs were established mainly by the prominent state dignitaries, *sanjak-beys* (district governors), *valis* (magistrates) and other influential and rich members of the society. With regard to architectural style and patterns, Bosnian madrasahs continued the tradition of earlier Seljuk madrasah with open courtyards. Education in the madrasah was organized in a traditional way: students were not divided according to the year of study but according to the circle (*halka*), that is, the mastered materials and acquired knowledge. This form of education allowed for more efficient advancement of students depending on their own individual efforts. The scope of the madrasah was mostly based on religious sciences such as *tafsir* (Interpretation of Qur'an), *hadith* (Tradition), *ahkam* (Law), *kalam* (Apologetics), and other sciences that were required by customs, tradition, and time.

In the former Yugoslavia, religious schools were limited in their ability to serve the needs of their community, and their primary aim became the preservation of their own religious identity. Due to the suppression of religious freedom and negative perceptions of religion by the communist regime, interest in religious education decreased and most madrasahs were closed, their work forbidden. The only madrasah that survived was Gazi Husrev bey Madrasah, named for its founder, Gazi Husrev bey, grandson of Sultan Bayazid II. Since 1995, religious educational institutions have been transforming themselves in order to meet the requirements of the post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina and the needs of the modern world. They have become more open and more involved in inter-religious and intercultural dialogues. The curriculum of the madrasah was also transformed in order to meet the requirements set by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, along with Islamic courses, madrasahs also offer non-religious courses similar to secular high schools in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The number of madrasah graduates varies each year from 400 to 500, who have the opportunity to continue their undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Islamic Studies as well as any other faculty of their choice. Many of them have become religious leaders, politicians, prominent philosophers, scientists and academicians.

According to some sources, the number of madrasahs in Bosnia and Herzegovina during

the Ottoman times exceeded one hundred. Today, eight madrasahs provide education to students:

- **Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasah** in Sarajevo is the oldest educational institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina which has continually been operative since its establishment in 1537.
- **Karađoz-Bey Madrasah** is the most renowned madrasah in Herzegovina. It was established in 1557 in Mostar by Mehmed-bey Zaim, who was known as Karađoz-bey due to his striking appearance (karađoz: black-eyed). Karađoz-bey was a brother of a Great Vezir Rustem Pasha and the sultan's governor in Herzegovina, Sinan Pasha. Karađoz-bey's Madrasah continually functioned until 1918 when it was closed. But in 1995 this madrasah was reestablished.
- **Behram-bey Madrasah** was established in Tuzla in 1626 and is the oldest educational institution in northeastern Bosnia. Behram-bey Madrasah was closed in 1949 and its building was completely demolished in 1974. In 1993 Behram-bey Madrasah was reestablished and is now located in a new building in Tuzla.
- **Elči Ibrahim Pasha Madrasah** in Travnik was established in 1706. Its founder, Elči Ibrahim Pasha, was a Vezir of Bosnia who at that time was residing in Travnik. After World War II, the communist regime closed the Madrasah. In 1994, the school was reopened.
- **Džemaludin-ef. Čaušević Madrasah** in Cazin was established in 1867 with a wooden structure, but it was burned down by Austro-Hungarian authorities in response to the Muslim revolts against the Empire. A new stone madrasah was built in 1890, and it was open until 1918 when it was closed due to financial problems. This madrasah was reestablished in 1993 and was named after Rais-ul-ulema (Grand Mufti) Džemaluddin ef. Čaušević.
- **Osman ef. Redžović Madrasah** in Visoko was established in 1992, and named after prominent Islamic scholar Osman ef. Redžović.
- **Dr. Ahmed Smajlović Madrasah** was founded in 1992 in Zagreb (Croatia). Since 2000 this madrasah has been incorporated into the Croatian system of high schools as a private institution. This madrasah as well as the below-mentioned madrasah maintain strong institutional links with the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- **Gazi Isa-bey Madrasah** was established in the mid-fifteenth century in Novi Pazar, Serbia. It was named after the famous founder (*waqif*) of Novi Pazar and Sarajevo Gazi Isa-bey Ishaković. Gazi Isa-bey Madrasah was open until 1946 when it was closed by the communist regime. With the fall of communism in former Yugoslavia Gazi Isa-bey Madrasah was reopened in 1990.

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Oxford University Press