

THE FIRST REVIVAL SCHOOLS AND ENLIGHTENERS IN THE MIDDLE RHODOPES UNTIL THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR OF 1878

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Abstract

In the present scientific announcement, based on documentary materials, that are kept in the funds of the State Archives of Smolyan, the "History of Bulgaria 15th–19th century" Department of the Regional Museum of History "Stoyu Shishkov" – Smolyan and personal archives, an analysis is made of the situation and the development of education in the Middle Rhodopes during the period from the beginning of the 19th century until the Russo-Turkish war of 1878, with a focus on the first revival schools and enlighteners at the end of the period. During the research work, documents not used previously, were also found and they made it possible to characterize new developments in educational work, to determine the characteristics and factors contributing to the development of the modern Bulgarian secular school. The paper reveals the important role and support of the Bulgarian Exarchate, the Edirne Bulgarian Diocese and Plovdiv Municipality for the establishment of the first Bulgarian schools in Ustovo and Dolno Raykovo and their impact on education in Ahachelebiysko, Rupchosa and Zlatograd. The establishment of such schools in other settlements of the Middle Rhodopes during this period is also examined. The important contribution of teachers and enlighteners, who were public figures and active participants in the struggles for National Liberation and ecclesiastical independence is also noticed.

Thus, during the Revival in the Middle Rhodopes, schools became the first institution that answered the spiritual and economic needs during this period and laid the basis for the development following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.