

Christian Clerical Schools – Shelters of Education and Culture in Albanian Territories (From Beginning to XV Century)

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Abstract

The story of the journey and revival of Christian clerical schools in the space of IX-XV centuries is an integral and very important part of our overall national history. If we look at the depth of centuries, we see that the problems of education and the school were tied up and dissolved with the religious problems in philosophy and practice, becoming themselves Christian clergymen and teachers in most cases. The aim of these schools, generally, were for national progress. They were opened by the Catholic and Orthodox clergy, and later by Muslim clergy. Funding and direction were provided from their headquarters, in order to prepare new local clergy, who would later serve in their homeland. It is understood that from this perspective carried with it the value of a scientific concept and democratic attitude towards religion by claiming the role played by religion in the introduction of the Albanian language in religious practices, which is a special uncontested merit for preserving the Albanian language against assimilation. Incorrect interpretation of the activity of these schools has continued in some way even after the 90s; even today some positions are not correct. The problem of schools can not be separated from the problem of language. Nowadays the problem arises of how to handle these schools in the history of Albanian education, also, what it is their place in history, setting out clearly and plainly what are called "centers of national education". In this context, in this treaty it is described objectively the history of religious Christian schools in Albanian lands from the beginning until the XV century.

Keyword: School, church, orthodox clergy, catholic clergy, financing, teacher, student, Albanian territories.

1. Introduction

Although politically under Byzantine Empire, Illyrian territories were dependent on Rome. Just around the year 732, Leo Izauras passed their control to the Patriarchate of Constantinople but the impact from the West went even further, because the Albanian lands remained the gate that connected East with West. On the other hand, Bulgarian and Serbian conquests made possible the insertion of Slavic influence.

According to the conditions created, Pope John VIII had allowed the use of Slavic language and writing on religious affairs in 880¹. Thus, from IX-X century Arber used Latin, Greek and Slavic alphabet and therefore in Middle Ages, Albanian territories were included in the three cultural realms: Greek, Latin and less in Slavic. According to researcher Nichol Loka, "the impact increased or lessened depending on the position of Westerners, Byzantines and Slavs, whether they would win or lose. Since the Albanian lands were part of Byzantium, since the VIII century, the official language was Greek. But starting with the twelfth century, with the addition of Western influence and the Catholic Church, Latin was introduced"².

Albanian language in this period, as the language of writing, was still able to resist especially to Greek and Latin scripts, the two international languages enriched in literature, which had the support of the state administration and church institutions, the most powerful ones of the Middle Ages. But in everyday language, "masses of the Albanian people, a good part of the local clergy and feudal lords increasingly used Albanian language"³.

¹ Hajrulla Koliqi, *Historia e arsimit dhe e mendimit pedagogjik shqiptar (më tej: Historia e arsimit ...)*, Prishtinë: "Libri Shkollor", 2002, f. 47.

² Ludovik Shllaku, *Shkollat klerikale (Vështrim historik nga fillimet deri më 1924) (më tej: Shkollat klerikale ...)*, Shkodër: Botimet "Camaj-Pipa", 2002, f. 42.

³ Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi, *Tekstet shqipe dhe shkrimi i shqipes në vitet 879-1800, botim i Akademisë së Shkencave të Shqipërisë dhe Institutit të Gjuhësisë dhe i Letërsisë, Tiranë: "Mësonjëtorja", 2005 Tekstet shqip dhe ...*, f. 42.

Cultural and educational situation in medieval Arber is attributable to this picture presented in the above lines.

2. Strands of Catholic Religious Education in Albanian Territories during the Time Frame of the IX-XV Centuries

Establishment and development of Christian schools in Albanian territories at the end of the Middle Ages is conditional, first and foremost to the religious and political moments. From various documents and scientific research done in years, it concludes that the Christian religious institutions are constantly trying to spread their influences in schools and that they, therefore, the Eastern Church in south and north West also had a monopoly on culture and the preparation of the elite of the time.

Most people, with few exceptions, were cultured clerics. In their hands were philosophy, literature, education and the arts. As a center of propagation of religious ideology, education and cultural and artistic activities served the Catholic and Orthodox monasteries, which besides acting actively even the Episcopalian "kurjet"⁴. *"Distributors of Byzantine clerical culture - states academician K. Frashëri - became the monks of the Holy Mountain monasteries and of Byzantine cultural centers. Distributors of Western culture were the early monks of: Benedict and Dominican, more later, in XII century, the minority Franciscan"*⁵.

Church at that time saw learning as one of its exclusive functions in the Arber territories where schools coexisted in Latin languages, Greek and Slavic. And when Christianity became more and more an intellectual religion, education became a more and more important aid.

3. Monasteries Schools

The first cultural and educational institutions of the Church were **monasteries**, which were established as centers of spiritual salvation, but also filled the cultural needs of the society⁶. The eminent scholar Milan Shuffaj in his work *"The situation of the church in the pre-ottoman Albania"*, writes: "Christian Monasteries of both rites, the west and east, despite the differences, had common features as humility, dedication, work, sacrifice and love for knowledge and culture. Catholic monks preferred to withdraw from life between people and formed their own independent communities and Orthodox monks were integrated into people's communities, while being placed under the authority of the Bishop of the place where the monastery was situated"⁷.

Monasteries were the only schools to learn, but they also serve as a publishing house for the multiplication of books. Only they had the library for storing books, they prepared wise men and they were the only institutions of education for the period. "Monasticism became in a wider sense an educational force of great importance for society as a whole. Monasticism lessons intended to accomplish these tasks: the ability to read the Bible; teaching writing, copying the holy books and learning calculations, to determine Christian holidays"⁸.

Indeed monasteries were the only educational institutions of this period. For too long, schools and monasteries considered educational foci for preparing the clergy. Until the thirteenth century, there was no education outside the schools and virtually all school monks and monasteries served as teachers⁹. During this period, all of their education was conducted at the monastery or outside the monastery under the guidance of monks.

"A religious school is witnessed since the beginning of the XV century, at the monastery of Shën Kollit (Mesopotam), where at the time took lectures from the neo-martyrs of that century, Shën Nifoni from Lukova, who continued studies "at the monks". [...] Such schools are witnessed near to all villages of Himara after the XV century, a part of which were opened by Brazilian missionaries"¹⁰.

⁴ Kristo Frashëri, *Historia e qytetërimit shqiptar (Nga kohët e lashta deri në fund të luftës së Dytë Botërore)* (më tej: *Historia e qytetërimit ...*), botim i Akademisë së Shkencave të Shqipërisë, Tiranë: Shtypshkronja "Grand Prind", 2008., f. 91.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Nikollë Loka, *"Zhvillimi i arsimit në Arbërinë Mesjetare"* (më tej: *"Zhvillimi i arsimit ..."*), në: *Studime historike – Recension e Publicistikë, vëll. I*, Tiranë: "Ermal", 2014, f. 27.

⁷ Milan Shuffaj, *Situata e kishës në Shqipërinë paraturke* (më tej: *Situata e kishës ...*), botimet françeskane, Shkodër 2013, f. 139.

⁸ N. Loka, *"Zhvillimi i arsimit ..."*, f. 27.

⁹ L. Shllaku, *Shkollat klerikale ...*, f. 43.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Shih edhe: Dhori Qirazi, *Krishtërimi në Shqipëri* (më tej: *Krishtërimi ...*), ribotim, Tiranë: "Argeta-LMG", 2000, f. 29

4. Schools of Parishes

In the late Middle Ages, learning locations were established at **parishes**, which arose in the villages. They were considered as a continuation of the church catechism school materials. Roman education system in villages was shabby and in Roman period there were no elementary school worked in there but with the increase of population, the villages needed larger space-time education for clergy. This need that time served not only clergy monastery monks, but also learn parish clergy. These established the first schools of the parish. They "were elementary schools that serve to provide primary education to boys who were considered as possible candidates for priesthood. After bishops themselves completing initial studies, they continued further studies in schools or cathedrals, where initially served as teachers, and later delegated this task to their subordinates"¹¹.

Elementary included "learning of reading and writing Latin, memorizing the psalms in Latin, and the initial elements of arithmetic"¹². Schools and parishes were popular, and could teach children of different social strata. The initial training of clergy, which was in these schools, it created opportunities for children of educated villagers further and they became clerics, marking an increase in their social status. But, usually, "children of broad layers of the population could become only the parish priest and could not climb high in the hierarchy of the church. In the best case, they benefited from the status of personal servant of the Bishop or such a position as a servant in "minor orders"¹³.

5. Schools of Cathedrals

Later, with the boom that came, in Albanian cities were created favorable conditions for the development of education and culture. The center of gravity of their lives and move towards cities were **cathedrals** educational functions, when near They rose their schools¹⁴. During this period, the establishment of new clergy was religious schools near large churches as in Durres, Bar, Shkodra, Ohrid, Drisht, Berat, etc.¹⁵

Before the establishment of universities, "medieval education had two cycles education. Usually at the age of six to seven years' children entered schools of the monasteries, parishes or cathedrals, which received basic education. School time change from time to time and from school to school"¹⁶.

However, the overall level of education in Albanian lands during the XIV century, it was still too low compared with Western Europe. It was under the influence of ecclesiastical institutions - in the south it was under the influence of Eastern Church and North under the Western Church. In both areas were very few schools.

In the area of the Eastern Church "at the time the Byzantine Empire, it had a developed education. Educational institutions in Byzantium had some original forms and one of their most important, was the division of secular education with ancient pagan traditions of religious education, the first organized by the state and the second, of the Orthodox Christian Church"¹⁷.

During XII-XV century, Orthodox schools (Greek and Slavic) ethnic lands were "genuine educational institutions in the premises of the Christian religion"¹⁸. Mainly children of generous feudal nobles, sometimes by church prelates grandchildren, attended them.

It should be emphasized, "education at this time was disorganized. School was not regular. The teacher taught the students individually. School was not regular. Cases where students attend school in groups were rare. In schools and monasteries," religious instruction accounted for the major share. They taught them memorized psalter, part of the Holy Scriptures, contemporary works of the church, books of stories from the life of the saints"¹⁹. Plans and programs of these

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 44.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Dh. Qiriazi, *Krishtërimi ...*, f. 59.

¹⁵ L. Shllaku, *Shkollat klerikale ...*, f. 14.

¹⁶ Dh. Qiriazi, *Krishtërimi ...*, f. 59. *Shih edhe: A. të ndryshëm, Histori e ...*, vëll. I, f. 335.

¹⁷ Koli Xoxi, *Shkolla ortodokse në Shqipëri. Rilindësit tanë (më tej: Shkolla ortodokse në ...)*, Tiranë: "Mokra", 2002, f. 12. *Shih edhe: Musa Kraja; Emirjona Kraja, "Shkolla shqipe në shekujt XVI-XVII dhe ndikimi i tyre në zhvillimin e mëtejshëm të arsimit shqip" (më tej: "Shkolla shqipe ...")*, në: *Shkollat shqipe të trevave shqiptare në shekujt XVI-XVIII*, Tiranë: "Gjergj Fishta", 2013, f. 47-48.

¹⁸ L. Shllaku, *Shkollat klerikale ...*, f. 14.

¹⁹ K. Xoxi, *Shkolla ortodokse në ...*, f. 12.

schools were not unique, but depended on the ability of schools and teachers. However, usually, students learned Greek (i.e., Slavic), arithmetic, reading and classical ecclesiastical works. If in the XII century, explaining the ancient Greek authors was mainly grammatical and parabolic, in the XV century it was purely literary and moral²⁰.

The medium of instruction was in Greek, for some time, during the Serb rule in Slavic. Few were those young people who parents sent them abroad to conduct studies "high", which in general were high school level. Monastic schools, tuition were given singly only in reading of the singings of psalms, and later given more organized forms including a wider circle of subjects²¹.

The lesson was deeply scholastic. "The teacher read aloud and understandably the text - emphasizes the researcher Koli Xoxi - as a means to acquire better to appropriate their content. The most beautiful passages that would be useful for behavior to people during life were memorized in memory and fixed by students. This would read aloud the passage in the evening and morning reiterating"²². Teaching in these schools "were attended only by boys"²³, because in this period cannot be mentioned girls education.

Irrespective of nationality with confidence headcount, which forced the Orthodox Church to come as the primary religion on ethnicity, in Greek or Slavic schools, received education Orthodox Albanians, they also received education in other schools, at higher levels. Such were especially popular schools in the monasteries of Mount Athos, the Meteors, in Thessaly or to the monastery of St. Catherine²⁴. Although these schools were not Albanian, but were Greek or Slavic, one side or Slavic and Hellenic influence affecting the Albanian population, in turn affecting the establishment of educational and cultural level of the Albanians and the recognition of erudite achievements of the time.

For many Albanians learning, the acquisition of the Greek language, still little known in Europe before the XV century, favored careers in the courts of Europe and had specific interests in the Byzantine world. The most prominent of these were:

"Durrusaku Nicholas, the secretary Crotona was part of the papal Curia, was selected by Pope Inocento IV, the main negotiator in talks with Constantinople, which lead to the reunification of Churches (1260-1280). According to contemporaries, his main virtue, beside knowledge of Christian doctrine had excellent knowledge of the Greek language, in addition to Latin, which allowed them to analyze and to find convergence between the scriptures of the Catholic Church and Orthodox churches. [...] Three centuries later, in 1592, Mateo Karafili, college teacher of St. Athanasius, which prepared missionaries who were sent to Albania and Greece to prepare the unification of the Orthodox clergy and believers of Vinarc with Rome, regarded as "IL INTELLIGENTE delle più della lingua latina scienze et soprattutto della lingua Greca." Its services were offered to the Papacy by another Albanian, Bartolomeo Brutus, who served as interpreter (dragoman) of Moldova Saxon prince Iancu and of Sinan Pasha, Grand Vizier of Albanian descent, who released from prison in 1579. Brutus was lead author of a plan for the unification of Moldova with Catholicism. Athanas Patrijku Ohrid, the leading organizer of a series of anti-Ottoman uprising at the turn of the XVI-XVII century, found in 1612 as a teacher of Greek language to a Neapolitan nobleman"²⁵.

Much the same situation is also in the educational ruled Western Church, with changes here as the language used Latin. E. Çabej writes: "These circumstances, coupled with the work of **Benedicts** and **Dominicans** stay in pre-Turkish Albania, two religious orders have established hotbeds of stationery culture wherever they went"²⁶. Add to this the **bazillions'**, **Bogumils** etc., Especially **Franciscans**, whose assemblies were Albanian education centers of Western culture.

"Having started from IX century, the Church of Rome sent to Albania the Order of Benedictine missionaries. In the northern part of Albania, the French Benedictine monks were established in 1236, initially in Shirgj, near Shkodra, in the monastery of Shën Arjgendeve; in Durrës in 1278 under the protection of Charles Anguine, while in the South for the first time moved into in 1345"²⁷.

The fundamental principle of the Benedictine was "*pray and work*" ("Ora et labora"), but they were also

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, f. 13.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Dhimitër Beduli, Kishë dhe kulture. (Studime) (më tej: Kishë dhe ...), botim i Institutit të Dialogut & Komunikimit, Tiranë: ID&K, 2006, f. 42.*

²⁵ M. Kraja; E. Kraja, "Shkolla shqipe ...", f. 47-48.

²⁶ Eqrem Çabej, Studime gjuhësore, vëll. III, Prishtinë: "Rilindja", 1976, f. 57.

²⁷ Dh. Qiriaz, Krishtërimi ..., f. 68.

distinguished for their work, study, cultural and educational. Their assemblies (lat. CONVENTUS-monastery monks), which were founded in episcopates of Bar, Durres, Dioklese, Shkodra etc., became important centers of medieval education, cultural, literary and science.

"Their activity in the field of education take place in several directions: they kept and described the ancient manuscripts as scripture, patristic works, but also classical works (Cicero etc.), As well as Latin, Greek and Arabic. They had active scriptorium and rich library dealing with architecture building church congregations (monasteries), schools, Hospice (inns) of agriculture orphan shelters and cultivating olive trees and vineyards"²⁸.

Benedictines, "since the IX century at the monastery of Saint Mihail in Rac, in Bar founded the first school of agriculture. In Bar also established other urban schools, archiepiscopal, of religious artisan"²⁹.

In the realm where as the teaching language used Latin, with the removal of the Benedictine religious scene, about the half of the XIII century, came Dominican and Franciscan friars immediately, that were at the beginning of their activity.

"From the first half of XIII century, then immediately after the establishment of these orders, by order of Pope came in Albania, separately, Dominican and Franciscan monks. [...] Between 1250-1370, Curia is made by these two orders from almost all Albanian prelates"³⁰.

Important role for the protection of Catholicism in regions had the fore- fathers and fathers of the Franciscan Order. They moved to the city of Durres, in 1283. For the stabilization of Catholicism in the northern parts of Arbëria key role played Archdiocese of Bar, established by Pope Gregory VII (1073-1080), of which depended not only from Shkodra, but also Catholic episcopates of Kruje, Skurjes, Pulti, Drishtii, Shas, Ulcinj and Sadra³¹. According to Professor H. Koliqi, "It was notable for the spread of education and culture of Latin to Albanians. Among the most popular churches in Romanic style were: Shas cathedral, church of Shirgjit (Shkoder), the church of St. Mary in Vau I Deja, Shelbuemi in Rubik church (Mirdita) and others."³².

Prof.dr. Jahja Drançolli in his work "*The contribution of Dominicans Albanian Catholic Church*," writes:

"In the century. XIII-XV, some coastal towns, Kotor, Bar, Ulcinj and Durres had a certain self (had status, currency and its own administration). In the XIII century established church orders: **Dominican** who came in Albanian lands after Benedictine; **the Franciscans** (founded by St. Francis, 1181-1226) or gray friars came almost simultaneously with Dominican tended to be more democratic and less intellectual. They were devoted to the poor and primary education, so he decided not only in cities but also in rural areas, where the Dominicans went. Franciscans served as connecting members made life very developed Medieval Church of Albania, with tasks that should be conducted by the Catholic Church in the country. Parliament Dominican and Franciscan Durres he was the most powerful. Dominican Center in Albania was Assembly (monastery) of St. Maurine in Durres³³, which was founded in 1224³³. Even the headquarters of the Franciscan in 1402, were transferred in Durres. In those years of the XIII century, especially the fourteenth, Dominicans and Franciscans established their assemblies in many other Albanian cities, as in Novoberde, Janja, Prizren, Pristina, Skopje, etc. They were under the protection of the pope and had great influence"³⁴.

Dominican gave impetus to the development of education in the Albanian regions. Opened near their religious assembly school of junior and senior levels³⁵, the result of which was added to the number of people knowing that exercise of intellectual activities. Near their congregations, they opened the school, not just religious but higher studies. Such schools also encountered in nearby cities of Episcopalian curies, traditional course curriculum taught in schools were granted by the western countries: in Ulcinj around the year 1258, in Kotor in 1266, in Durres circa 1278, in Shkodra

²⁸ Vinçenc Malaj, *Kontributi i klerit katolik shkrimeve shqipe, "Meshari" i Gjon Buzukut - monument i kulturës shqiptare (1555-1995)*, Ulqin: "Art club-Ulqin", 1995, f. 179. *Shih edhe: H. Koliqi, Historia e arsimit ..., vëll. I, f. 50.*

²⁹ H. Koliqi, *Historia e arsimit ..., vëll. I, f. 51.*

³⁰ M. Shuffaj, *Situata e kishës ..., f. 155.*

³¹ Dh. Qiriazi, *Krishtërimi ..., f. 68.*

³² H. Koliqi, *Historia e arsimit ..., vëll. I, f. 51.*

³³ Në këtë kuvend kishte qëndruar që nga viti 1359 për një kohë të gjatë, Domenik Topia, vëllai i princit shqiptar Tanush Topia. *Kuvende të tjera u hapën në Shkodër në vitin 1345, në Lezhë në vitin 1350; në Ulqin në vitin 1258. [...] Veprimtaria e tyre misionare u zhvillua kryesisht në qytetet bregdetare, ku kishin kuvendet si Tivari, Ulqini, Shkodra e Durrësi që vareshin nga Kongregacioni i Raguzës. [Marrë nga: Blerim Çela, *Shqiptarët ndër shekuj, Tiranë: "Koha", 2001, f. 131.**

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Milan Shuffaj, *Situata e kishës në Shqipërinë paraturke, botimet françeskane, Shkodër 2013, f. 31.*

³⁶ Jahja Drançolli, "Kontributi i dominikaneve shqiptarë për kishën katolike", në: *Dardania Sacra, nr. 1, Prishtinë: "Shtufi", 1999, f. 68.* *Shih edhe: H. Koliqi, Historia e arsimit ..., vëll. I, f. 51.*

in 1345, in Bar from The second half of the XV century, and in Drisht, Novoberde etc.³⁶. Drishti city had good tradition in the field of education. There were more educated clergy who worked priests and teachers in Dalmatian cities. Important educational and cultural centers were also in Deja of Hasi, Shurdhaku etc.³⁷

In connection with these schools, academician K. Frashëri writes, "low cycle consisted of literary subjects (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and high cycle of scientific subjects (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music)"³⁸. But according to him, "for the teaching of these subjects agree with the learned clergy contract. One of these related contracts between parents and teachers, in 1367 said." Magister John, a doctor in grammar, declares, that the priest promises and forced against Andre of The Shupal and Pulti that will teach his grandson, Nicholas, to read and write well, commercial manner and to teach him Donati and Katonin to know to interpret. And therefore the remembrance priest promised him would give it 20 Perper..."³⁹. Albanian teachers did such contact in a number of Dalmatian cities. With the development of cities, in schools, at the student clerics, they began to flock here and the pupils from craft classes and trading cities. The use of Greek in the south and north Latin inscriptions provide what churches have reached in our days. Thus, for example, Epitaph of Glavinica* (Mallakastër) of the year 1373 is Greek, and the inscription of the Queen of Rasha, Helena, in the church of Shirgjit (Shkodra) in 1290 is Latin⁴⁰.

From among the Dominicans clerics that went to Church some of these took high positions not only domestically, but also abroad.

"Some of the Albanians frats became speaker of the Order or senior clerics in other countries. In 1300 it mentioned Fra Stephen Shkodra as vicar in a convent of Ragusa. In 1385, the Provincial of the Province of Dalmatia is an Albanian. Even assembly Guardian of Zadar is an Albanian Franciscan in 1396. Likewise, in 1396, the Guardian of the Franciscan Monastery in Zadar has been Alex from Shkodra, and in 1440 the provincial of the province of Dalmatia has been fra Nikola from Durres. The Franciscan Order was strengthened continuously, especially from bishops that emerged from its ranks; he began to reveal his activity most of the time only during the Turkish invasion. Secular clergy who were the majority in northern Albania took place in other countries. The intensity of trade with Ragusa made this city "flooded" by Albanian priests. In 1349, when an epidemic of plague broke out and the two subsequent years, Ragusa notarial books mentioned 24 Albanian secular priests, of whom seven were from Drishti, 7 from Ulcinj, 4 from St. Paul of Pulti, 2 from Bar, 1 by Baleci, 1 from Shkodra, one of St. Kosmas-Damian, one of St. Stephen The Dashboard, one of Spas, one from St. Shirgji and 1 from St. Kolli in Buna"⁴¹.

Over time this activity went falling until they were completely disconnected by the ottoman conquest. In fact, the final assembly of the Dominicans in Durres was abandoned in 1501, when the friars together with their settlers were transferred near Traguri (Trogir) in Dalmatia, forming village on the island of Sholtës Arbanasi.

Also, religious orders, like Franciscans and Dominicans built a vast network of education in Albanian lands, on top of which was the University of Durres.

6. University of Durres

Referring to the studies and scientific research in years past to enlighten our educational and cultural past, primary importance has undoubtedly the publication of two documents issued by the Italian archives, which shed light on the activity of university studies in Durres. Relying on these documents, the researcher, Jahja Drançolli in the article "University of Durres (c. XIV)" published in the scientific journal *"Bulletin of the Faculty of Philosophy, XXIII / 1993*, University of Pristina, acquainted with the fact that "in the early 80s of the XIV century in Durres acted "General Studies" ("Studia Generale"), respectively for undergraduate university level"⁴².

"Such schools had superior studies only at the University of Bologna since 1189 (known for theological studies); Oxford by the end of the XII century (known for theological and philosophical studies), Cambridge from 1209 (known for

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ H. Koliqi, *Hstoria e arsimit ...*, vëll. I, f. 52.

³⁸ K. Farshëri, *Historia e qytetërimit ...*, f. 90.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

* *Punim në pëlthurë mëndafshi i fundit të shek. XIV. (Marrë nga: A. të ndryshëm, Historia e ...*, vëll. I, f. 238.

⁴⁰ Dh. Qiriazi, *Krishtërimi ...*, f. 81.

⁴¹ N. Loka, *"Zhvillimi i arsimit ..."*, f. 34.

⁴² Jahja Drançolli, "Universiteti i Durrësit (shek. XV)" (më tej: "Universiteti i Durrësit ..."), në: *Buletin i Fakultetit Filozofik, nr. XXIII/1993, Prishtinë, 1995, f. 108.*

studies theological and philosophical; Padua since 1222 (known from studies of philosophy, medicine and theology); Sorbonne since 1253 (known for theology studies); Barcelona since 1303, Canterbury since 1320, Florence since 1378. Later, after the establishment of university studies in Durres, these studies existed in Prague since 1383, Salamanca and Kharkov since 1421; Zadar since 1495; Avila and Seville since 1504; Budim since 1507 and other European Universities and also outside Europe when they rose later"⁴³.

From the above data, chronologically, it is clear that the opening of universities in Middle Ages, had become common and mass occurrence for each European city to develop, but also to the Balkans where only two universities functioning: Durres and Zadar. Both of these universities or general studies became known for studies of this area of theology.

As in all the universities of Europe during the Middle Ages, where teaching was organized under the auspices of the church, or by the organization of ecclesiastical orders, as, for example the Dominican, Franciscan and Benedictine order, Durres general studies were organized by the Dominican Order of Durres. Even the city's Dominican palace and Convent was offered to their studies, as well as several buildings to accommodate students⁴⁴.

For clarification of the data referring to the University of Durres, will highlight some of the most interesting arguments, that brings us professor J. Drançolli:

"First does not feature any studies on the organization of Durres. However, the data arising from it becomes clear that the University of Durres has existed even before the first attacks by Ottomans in Albania, and there during the rule of Venetians in Durres, i.e. before the year 1392, when the city in question came under the Republic of Venice. The proof of evidence may arise if the Rome Archives document in question is complemented with some other documents stored in time. Drawing on few archival data on this issue, we believe that this institution of higher education is set in the reign of Karl Topiaj, suzerain of Durres. We say so, since the data show that the state time during the tenure of Durres Karl Topiaj* lived in full blooming period of social and economic relations, political, religious and cultural-educational"⁴⁵.

It is true that the city of Durres in the second half of the XIV century, has been an important center of studies not only for Albania and Bosnia, but also for Dalmatia and Hungary. When it was founded, the University of Durres had nine masters and 100 students⁴⁶. Besides Albanian students, who came from all Albanian lands here they have studied even students from other Balkan territories and beyond. Lectures were held at the Palace of Dominican Convent in Durres. Unfortunately, unlike many known European universities, whose buildings are pretty well preserved nowadays, palace University of Durres, was devastated by the barbaric attacks of the Ottoman hordes 1501⁴⁷, destroying the institution of the Albanian higher education.

Documentary records of the time show that the University of Durres had many doctors promoting science, who after passing the relevant examinations in the field of theological sciences reached the highest academic title "Doctor of science" ("Magister theologiae" or "Sacre theologiae Professor")⁴⁸.

The second document J. Drançolli bring us into his study, which also refers to the University of Durres, sheds light on the qualification and the number of teaching staff, who teach in the center of superior education.

"According to diaries here taught by 25 title doctors of theology. Relying on this issue, which undoubtedly was very imposing on medieval conditions, with full conviction it can be said that this institution has enjoyed great name in scientific research. In this document is complemented with documents and other publications of the time, arising from the source of the University of Bologna and Padua, the center in which the author of this paper has done research, it is clear that neither the university centers among the most concerned notably in Europe, over the XIV century enjoyed no greater number of teachers, carrying the title of doctor of science"⁴⁹.

As in other university centers of Europe, the studies and schools of Durres and other Albanian schools of the time, "teaching is developed mainly in Latin language, language that throughout the whole medieval period in western Europe,

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Hava - Sali Hidri, *Historia e Durrësit (më tej: Historia e ...)*, Durrës: Botimet "Jozep", 2012, f. 47.

* Që nga rënia e anzhuinëve, më 1350, e deri në vitin 1367, kur zot i Durrësit u bë Karl Topiaj, ky qytet me tradita të lashta kulturore dhe arsimore, jetoi si komune qytetare e lirë dhe autonome (comuna civitas). Qyteti e arriti kulmin e zhvillimit të tij në kohën e Karl Topisë në vitet 1367-1392. (Marrë nga: Hava - S. Hidri, *Historia e ...*, f. 48.).

⁴⁵ J. Drançolli, "Universiteti i Durrësit ...", f. 108.

⁴⁶ H. Koliqi, *Historia e arsimit ...*, vëll. I, f. 53.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ J. Drançolli, "Universiteti i Durrësit ...", f. 108.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

southern and middle, respectively, in England, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, among Albanians, Croats and Slovenes is considered the official language⁵⁰. As we noted in this study, Latin language for Catholic Albanians and among European peoples of this rite is considered education and intelligence.

However, research and subsequent studies, especially from S. Riza, Sh. Demiraj, Dh. S. Shuteriqi, J. Lodhi, R. Elsie, N. Jorgaqi, Sh. Sinani etc., unearth details, which have made it possible to lighten the best question of the use of the Albanian language in Arber and the Dalmatian coastal cities, such as in Ragusa and Kotor. For the Albania language development during the Middle Ages, the main role mentioned were of university and schools. For the purposes of the church, but also for educational and pedagogical purposes, professors and promoters at the University of Durres and other Albanian schools, had written perhaps even works in Albanian language, which is best proved by the data of arguments in the third case ("Evidence for writing the Albanian language").

These lines were written on University of Durres in order to prove once again the high development of science, education and culture for centuries, which for certain purposes has not yet found its rightful place among European cultural science and beyond. Also, the purpose of our paper is that through lighting sources unknown, that matter first hand argued the early beginnings of science and Albanian school, which, while maintaining an ancient tradition in the field of education, made possible to our people always appreciate the freedom, work, knowledge, culture, art, and to develop them, which best demonstrates its vitality and genius for centuries.

7. Conclusions

IX- XV century's schools are historical cradle of our education. Teachers that opened out to these schools and taught among them, should be recognized as important figures of the Albanian national Education.

Schools opened at Christian religious institutions, especially the Catholic religion, as one of the earliest schools, documented in the centuries from IX to XV is the syllabus of this education, and orientation simultaneously organized by the first school of European culture of Western civilization. These should be regarded as the first Christian schools in the historical land of Albania.

We believe that the study of Christian religious schools in the space of IX-XV centuries, it is not exhaustive, but remains the subject for all historians, archivists, philologists, bibliography, older teachers, who know these problems and have written in scientific journals and in the press of the time.

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⁵⁰ *Ibid*, f. 109.