

Salonica Fire of 1890 and its Impacts on the Transformation of the City

1890 Selânik Yangını ve Şehrin Gelişimine Etkileri

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the 1890 Salonica fire and its effects on the development of the city. Fires caused by natural causes or human error were part of everyday life in Salonica. Small fires were common for everyday life. But when fires grew, the consequences became devastating. The narrow and dead-end streets most affected by the fires were the Jewish quarters in the city center, where wooden houses were located. The existing wooden building stock of these neighbourhoods was the most important cause of the fires. These neighborhoods, with their old and wooden buildings, did not match the new modern face of the city. These neighborhoods had to be transformed according to the new urbanism and the zoning law of 1882. However, due to the current property situation of the region and the high cost of expropriation, the Municipality of Salonica could not enter these areas. At this point, the fire of 1890 was a turning point for the city. The fire caused a major humanitarian disaster, leaving

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thousands of people homeless. But the fire was an opportunity for the transformation of Salonica. The fire destroyed some of the Jewish neighborhoods with wooden buildings in the city center. The Municipality of Salonica, using the authority given by the zoning law of 1882, prohibited reconstruction in the area and prepared maps of the area. The burned areas were rebuilt according to the understanding of modern urbanism. This transformation marked the final phase of Salonica's modernization.

Keywords: Salonica, Fire of 1890, 1882 Zoning Law, Municipality of Salonica, Jewish.

Öz

Bu çalışma, 1890 Selânik yangını ve kentin gelişimine etkilerini değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Doğal sebeplerle ya da insan hatası nedeniyle çıkan yangınlar Selânik'te gündelik hayatın bir parçasıydı. Küçük yangınlar gündelik hayat için olağan karşılanmaktaydı. Fakat yangınlar büyüdüğü zaman sonuçları yıkıcı olmaktaydı. Yangınlardan en çok etkilenen dar ve çıkmaz sokaklar ahşap evlerin bulunduğu kent merkezindeki Yahudi mahalleleriydi. Bu mahallelerin mevcut ahşap yapı stoğu yangınların da en önemli sebebiydi. Aynı zamanda Eski ve ahşap yapıların bulunduğu bu mahalleler kentin yeni modern yüzüyle uyuşmuyordu. Bu mahallelerin yeni şehircilik anlayışı ve 1882 İmar Kanunu'na göre dönüştürülmesi gerekiyordu. Ancak bölgenin mevcut mülk durumu ve istimlakın pahalı olması nedeniyle Selânik Belediyesi bu alanlara giremiyordu. Bu noktada 1890 yangını kent için bir dönüm noktası oldu. Yangın büyük bir insani felakete yol açtı ve binlerce insanı evsiz bıraktı. Ancak yangın Selânik'in dönüşümü için de bir fırsat oldu. Yangında şehir merkezinde ahşap yapıların bulunduğu Yahudi mahalleleri yok oldu. Selânik Belediyesi 1882 tarihli imar kanununun verdiği yetkiyi kullanarak bölgede yeniden yapılaşmayı yasakladı ve bölgenin haritalarını hazırladı. Yanan bölgeler modern şehircilik anlayışına göre yeniden inşa edildi. Bu dönüşüm Selânik'in modernleşmesinin son evresini belirledi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Selânik, 1890 Yangını, 1882 İmar Kanunu, Selânik Belediyesi, Yahudi.

Introduction

Fire is one of the disasters caused by natural means or human errors. If not effectively combated, the results can be devastating. Fires, the results of which could be devastating, became one of the determining factors in the transformation of some Ottoman cities such as Salonica in the 19th century. In this context, it considerably affected the architectural features and structure of the cities¹. Fires used to be a part of daily life in Salonica, which underwent a gradual transformation in the second half of the 19th century and became one of the most important port cities of the Ottoman Empire². Fires, which were a part of urban life in Salonica, caused great damage to the city³. The Jewish settlements, including the bazaar areas, were most affected by the fires⁴. The archive documents of the 19th century reveal that Salonica struggled against the fires many times. For instance, 14 fires broke out in the city between 1839 and 1857. In 1888, 2 inns, 4 shops, 3 houses and 1 tannery burned in 9 fires in the city centre and its neighbourhoods⁵.

Even if there were not always life losses, what were the causes of such great fires and the factors that facilitated the spread of the flames in the city? Answers to be given for these questions will also make it easier to understand the transformation of the city resulting from the fires. The existing building stock and architectural features of the city of Salonica were wide open to fires. The wooden houses in Salonica were one of the primary causes of fires. The Jewish dwellings, which were built in the style of rooms and courtyards, were built of wood and adjacent to each other in narrow streets. The rooms, built in layers around a courtyard, were intended to make more economical use of the land and streets that did not

- 1 Baha Öztunç, “20. Yüzyılın Başında Biga’da Yangın Afeti ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma”, *Belleten*, Vol. 82/No. 293, 2018, p. 295.
- 2 Martinidiz Vilma Hastaoglou, “A Mediterranean City in Transition: Salonica Between The Two World Wars”, *The Scientific Journal Facta Universitatis*, Vol. 1/No. 4, 1997, p. 494.
- 3 Nancy Carol Stein, *Using The Visual To “See” Absence: The Case of Salonica*, Florida Atlantic University, Florida 2013, p. 52.
- 4 Diren Çakılci, *19. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Selânik Şehri*, Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Unpublished Phd Thesis, Antalya 2021, p. 150; Hüseyin Özgür - Sedat Azaklı, “Osmanlı Yangınları ve İtfaiye Hizmetleri”, *Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 3/ No. 1, 2001, p. 162.
- 5 Çakılci, *ibid*, p. 357; Meropi Anastassiadou, *Tanzimat Çağında Bir Osmanlı Şehri Selanik*, trans. Işık Ergüden, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 74; *1307 (Hicri) Selânik Vilâyeti Salnâmesi*, Vilayet Matbaası, Selânik 1307 (Hicri), pp. 260-261.

have enough place to build large households⁶. Adjacent buildings in narrow and dead-end streets caused the fire to spread to a very large area in a short time with the effect of the wind⁷. On the other hand, there were no firewalls among the houses for preventing the spread of flames due to the narrow streets. This caused the fires to create a domino effect and spread over large areas in a short time. Another factor was the north wind, which the Thessalonians called the “Vardar wind”. When it blew heavily, the Vardar created a fan effect, causing the flames to spread in a very short time. Another factor was the scarcity of water resources which were only sufficient for daily needs⁸. The lack of infrastructure and a modern firefighters union to fight fires with water effectively caused the fires to grow in a short time.

It was necessary to find a solution for the fires, which was an important problem of the cities throughout the empire. One of the priorities of the regulations made after 1838 regarding roads and buildings was to set out a solution to the fires experienced by the cities. Although the provisions of the roads and zoning regulations, issued in 1848 and 1863, were different by their periods, they generally included the rules to be applied in the execution of zoning activities such as building materials, measures to be taken against fires, street widths, building heights, fire resistance, taxes to be collected and duties of civil servants⁹. One of the important tasks of the municipalities, which started to be established in the second half of the 19th century based on the regulations, was to find solutions to fires. The Municipality of Salonica was founded in 1869¹⁰. The Municipality of Salonica extended its urban transformation efforts after the 1870s to prevent the destructive effects of fires. The municipality and its city planners reconstructed the city streets according to the grid system by taking advantage of the fires that devastated the city from time to time. These arrangements were made with the existing regulations. The widening of the roads in the city centre, the dock and port, the immigrant quarters and the construction of suburbs outside the centre was built with the regulations¹¹.

6 Çakılcı, *ibid*, p. 151.

7 Ceylan İrem Gençer, “19 Yüzyılda İzmir ve Selanik’te Kentsel Dönüşüm: Rıhtım ve Limanların İnşası”, *Meltem: İzmir Akdeniz Akademi Dergisi*, No. 1, 2017, p. 36.

8 Anastasiadou, *ibid*, pp. 73-75.

9 Kayra Kirpi, *II. Abdülhamit Dönemi Ebniye Nizamnameleri*, Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, İstanbul 2020, p. 78.

10 Gençer, “19 Yüzyılda İzmir ve Selanik’te Kentsel Dönüşüm: Rıhtım ve Limanların İnşası”, p. 36.

11 Ceylan İrem Gençer, “19. Yüzyılda Kentsel Dönüşüm Dinamikleri: İzmir ve Selanik (1840-

However, in 1870, with the construction of the quay following the destruction of the sea walls, the city could go beyond its traditional borders¹².

Did the 1890 fire have an impact on the transformation that Salonica experienced? The developments in the waterfront and suburbs created a stark contrast with the neighbourhoods in the city centre. The squalor and poor conditions of the neighbourhoods just a few streets behind the waterfront buildings did not align with the progress of the city. Narrow and disorderly streets and devastated wooden buildings, discoloured the urban appearance. These neighbourhoods, predominantly inhabited by impoverished Jews, posed a problem for the municipality and city planners. The irregular and dead-end streets, urban clustering, and old wooden structures also hindered the transformation of the city. The Municipality of Salonica was unable to carry out the necessary transformation to prevent fires in this area. The existing ownership status of these neighbourhoods prevented serious intervention by Ottoman authorities. The high cost of expropriation hindered the municipality from undertaking the task of organizing the streets and avenues in these areas. The 1890 fire paved the way for the redevelopment of the Salonica city centre. Although the fire caused a catastrophe and left thousands homeless, it created an opportunity for urban transformation. All fires in Salonica contributed to the development and change of the city¹³. The destruction of wooden structures by fires, the subsequent change in building materials towards masonry, and the reconstruction of streets and avenues brought about many innovations¹⁴. This article aimed to examine the Salonica fire of 1890, which destroyed the old wooden structures in the Jewish neighbourhoods of the city center, and its impact on development of the city.

1. Occurrence of the Fire and the Damage it Caused

The fires that occurred in June and July before the fire of September 1890 seemed to foreshadow the conflagration. A fire broke out in Unkapamı on June 2nd resulting in the burning of 10 rooms belonging to the Greek community. On the same day, a fire occurred in a house on the Street of Çavuş Manastırı, where one

1910)", *Mimarlık*, 394, Mart- Nisan 2017, p. 51.

12 Hastaoglou, "A Mediterranean City in Transition: Salonica Between The Two World Wars", p. 494; Sotirios Dimitriadis, *The Making of An Ottoman Port City: The State, Local Elites and Urban Space in Salonica, 1870-1912*, University of London, London 2013, p. 34.

13 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, pp. 103-104.

14 Öztunç, "20. Yüzyılın Başında Biga'da Yangın Afeti ve Sosyal Yardımlaşma", p. 295.

person was found dead. Fires also occurred on June 19th and 20th. Additionally, the drought experienced during the summer of 1890 boosted the water shortage in the city¹⁵. The aqueducts that carried water from the hills had dried up. This situation further hindered effective firefighting as there was a lack of water to combat the fires¹⁶.

The Salonica Fire of 1890 started on the night of Wednesday, September 3rd, in a Jewish distillery in the Küçük Pazar neighbourhood near Unkapanı. Fanned by the strong Vardar wind, the fire split into five branches and lasted for approximately 12 hours¹⁷. The narrow and dead-end streets, along with the predominantly wooden and adjacent buildings in the area where the fire started, led to its rapid spread. The fire was described in Ottoman documents and newspapers of the time as “a great conflagration, an astonishing conflagration, a horrific conflagration, a terrible catastrophe” The fire, which caught people in their sleep, was announced to the public through cannons fired from the fortress. It continued until noon the following day¹⁸.

Due to the wind, the fire quickly spread to the neighbourhoods inhabited by poor Jewish families with wooden houses. Despite the efforts of Governor Galip Pasha, who participated in coordinating firefighting efforts, the fire could not be brought under control. The scarcity and outdatedness of fire pumps also played a role in this¹⁹. The pumps sent by the municipality and insurance companies proved to be useless. Two pumps were destroyed by the intensity of the fire. The limited water supply, difficult transportation, irregular streets, and densely packed wooden structures made it almost impossible to combat the fire effectively²⁰. Therefore,

15 Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Presidency of State Archives, Ottoman Archives (Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA)) Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Adliye ve Mezahib Nezareti Maruzatı (Y.PRK.AZN), 4/28, 4 Haziran 1306 /16 Haziran 1890; BOA, Yıldız Perakende Posta Telgraf Nezareti Maruzatı (Y.PRK.PT), 6/55, 6 Haziran 1306/18 Haziran 1890; Anastassiadou, *ibid*, p. 111.

16 “The Salonica Fire”, *The Aberdare Times*, 13 September 1890, p. 2.

17 BOA, Yıldız Perakende Askeri Maruzat (Y.PRK.ASK), 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306/5 Eylül 1890; BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi (DH.MKT), 1757/123, 23 Ağustos 1306 /4 Eylül 1890; *Żuhûr*, No. 175, 27 Ağustos 1306/8 Eylül 1890, p. 2; *Żuhûr*, No. 180, 1 Eylül 1306 /13 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

18 “Harik-i Hâil”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890), p. 3; *Żuhûr*, No: 180, 1 Eylül 1306 /13 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

19 BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306/5 Eylül 1890.

20 *Mürüvvet*, No:19, 6 Eylül 1306/18 Eylül 1890, p. 4; İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devrinde Osmanlı Mahalli İdareleri (1840-1880)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2000, p. 212.

the only option was to prevent loss of life and save portable belongings. Due to the inadequate water supply and fire brigade, it became evident that the fire could not be extinguished, and the people focused on saving their lives and possessions²¹. The people piled their belongings in open areas to protect them from the fire, but the fire reached and destroyed those areas as well²². The fire lasted for approximately 20 hours before it was finally brought under control the next day and extinguished in Kalamaria around noon²³. After the fire was extinguished, the extent of the material damage became apparent. The fire had destroyed a significant portion of the wooden structures in the city centre²⁴. The Jewish neighbourhoods located in the southeastern part of the city were devastated by the fire²⁵. Due to the cold weather, the people faced difficult hours until aid reached them²⁶.

The initial information concerning the intensity of the event in natural disasters is unreliable. The credibility of the initial information must be questioned. It was reported that a reliable investigation regarding the damage caused by the fire could not be conducted based on the initial information. Rumors spread in the foreign press on the first day, stating that 200 people had perished in the fire. However, subsequent investigations revealed that this was not true²⁷. The initial reports sent by the Ottoman official authorities indicated that a considerable number of residences and shops had burned down, and two-thirds of the city had been damaged by the fire. Initial examinations conducted after the fire was extinguished determined that the number of burned houses was nearly one thousand. According to the investigation report, it was determined that a significant number of buildings were affected, including 816 large and small houses and rooms, 171 shops and stores, three silk factories, one tannery, five schools, ten synagogues, one hospital, and

21 “Selânik’te Harik Dehşeti”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No: 3646, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, p. 1-2; *Żuhûr*, No. 123, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

22 “The Salonica Fire”, *The Aberdare Times*, 13 September 1890, p. 2.

23 BOA, DH.MKT. 1757/123, 23 Ağustos 1306 /4 Eylül 1890; *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3646, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, p. 1-2; “Selânik Harik-i Haili”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 7, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

24 Stein, *ibid*, p. 52.

25 1311 (*Hicri*) *Selânik Vilayet Salnamesi*, Hamidiye Mekteb-i Sanayi Matbaası, Selânik 1309, p. 225; Mark Mazower, *Selanik, Hayaletler Şehri Hristiyanlar, Müslümanlar ve Yahudiler, (1430-1950)*, trans. Gül Çağalı Güven, Alfa Yayınları, İstanbul 2013, p. 322.

26 “Harik-i Hail”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3652, 1 Eylül 1306 /13 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

27 “Selânik’te Harik Dehşeti”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3646, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, pp. 1-2; “Selânik Harik-i Haili”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 8, 26 Ağustos 1306 /7 Eylül 1890, pp. 3-4.

one mosque. Subsequent investigations reported that approximately 1,400 houses, shops, stores, schools, mosques, churches, and synagogues had been burned down and destroyed. More than 12,000 people were left homeless as a result of the fire, with 90% of them being Jewish and the majority of the remaining population being Greek, while Muslims accounted for only 4-5 families. Among foreigners, 7/8 of Jewish and Christian families were affected by the fire²⁸. According to the accounts of the Greek and Jewish press, 6,000 families comprising over 20,000 individuals were left homeless²⁹. An investigation conducted by representatives of the Alliance Israelite estimated the number of homeless Jews to be 1,700 families³⁰. According to Jewish researchers, approximately two thousand houses were destroyed in this area³¹.

The fire devastated the neighbourhoods located in the centre of Salonica and Küçük Pazar, where a poor and densely populated population resided³². A 20-hectare area consisting mainly of Jewish neighbourhoods between the quay and Vardar Street was destroyed in the fire. The population density was high in this part of the city³³. The majority of the fire victims were impoverished Jews, many of whom became homeless³⁴.

The fire also destroyed religious structures and public buildings. Official investigations revealed that significant symbols of Salonica, such as the Hagia Sophia Mosque, the Kasimiye Mosque, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Cathedral, three churches, and 14 synagogues, were burned down along with their belongings³⁵. The poor had moved their belongings to the courtyard of the

28 BOA, Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Başkıtabet Dairesi (Y.PRK.BŞK),19/28, 25 Ağustos 1306 /6 Eylül 1890; "Selânik Hariki", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No: 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Żuhûr*, No. 180, 1 Eylül 1306 /13 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

29 Anastasiadou, *ibid*, p. 112.

30 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, p. 108.

31 Rena Molho, *Selanik Yahudileri 1856-1919*, trans. Panayot Abacı, Bağlam Yayınları, İstanbul 2005, p. 105.

32 BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306 /5 Eylül 1890.

33 Gençer, "19. Yüzyılda Kentsel Dönüşüm Dinamikleri: İzmir ve Selanik (1840-1910)", p. 51.

34 BOA, DH.MKT. 1757/123, 23 Ağustos 1306/4 Eylül 1890; BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306/5 Eylül 1890; *Mürüvvet*, No. 7, 25 Ağustos 1306 /6 Eylül 1890, p. 2; *Mürüvvet*, No. 19, 6 Eylül 1306 /18 Eylül 1890, p. 4.

35 BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306/5 Eylül 1890; BOA, Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Elçilik, Şehbenderlik ve Ateşemiliterlik (Y.PRK.EŞA), 12/3, 7 Eylül 1306/19 Eylül 1890; "Selânik Hariki", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3650, 30 Ağustos 1306 /11 Eylül 1890), p. 2.

Hagia Sophia Mosque to save them; however, when the fire spread to the mosque, the items stored there caused the ancient structure to be destroyed³⁶. The Hagia Sophia Mosque was one of the largest religious buildings in the city. The wooden parts of the structure, including the doors, windows, the roof surrounding and partially covering the dome, and the tip of the minaret, were severely damaged. It had suffered heavy damage in the 1890 fire and had remained unrepaired for a long time. The majority of the synagogues in the city were destroyed and collapsed. The major schools belonging to non-Muslims were burned down³⁷. The Catholic St. Theodora Monastery, the branch of the Ottoman Bank, the revenue administration, the public debt department, and the telegraph office were among the buildings damaged by the fire³⁸. The consulate buildings of England and Greece were also rendered inoperational due to the fire. The Ottoman Sultan conveyed his condolences to the British consul because of the unavailability of the British consulate³⁹.

The financial damage caused by the fire was substantial. The civil and military authorities, in their telegrams, indicated that the general damage resulting from the fire amounted to around 600,000 Turkish liras, with the losses incurred by insurance companies estimated at approximately 220,000 Ottoman liras⁴⁰. The British Consul in Salonica calculated the cost to be around 600,000 pounds, of which only one-third was insured⁴¹. According to a news article in the *Zuhûr* newspaper dated to September 11th, the total loss incurred by nine insurance companies amounted to 164,000 lines⁴². While the larger houses and structures affected by the fire were insured, the residences belonging to the poor were entirely uninsured⁴³. As reported by the *Sabah* newspaper, in 1889, ninety per cent of the

36 *Žuhûr*, No: 175, 27 Ağustos 1306/8 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

37 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, pp. 105-110.

38 Bea Lewkowicz, *The Jewish Community of Salonica: An Exploration of Memory and Identity in A Mediterranean City*, University of London, London 1999, p. 140; “Selânik’te Harik Dehşeti”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3646, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, pp. 1-2.

39 BOA. Y.PRK.EŞA. 12/3, 7 Eylül 1306 /19 Eylül 1890; “Selânik Hariki”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3650, 30 Ağustos 1306 /11 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

40 BOA. Y.PRK.ASK. 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306 /5 Eylül 1890; “Selânik Hariki”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Žuhûr*, No. 180, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

41 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, p. 105.

42 *Žuhûr*, No. 178, 30 Ağustos 1306 /11 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

43 “Selânik Hariki”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Žuhûr*, No. 180, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

shops in Salonica were insured. The residences of the affected merchants and prominent individuals, being insured, had their losses covered by the insurance companies. Consequently, this particular class in the city did not suffer significant losses. The middle-class artisans and traders were the ones most affected⁴⁴.

Fire insurance had become an established practice in the Ottoman Empire following major fires. In the second half of the 19th century, British and French insurance companies opened branches in Salonica, with the majority of them being British companies. Some of the British insurance companies that suffered considerable losses in the fire decided to cease their operations in Salonica⁴⁵. The Royal company transferred its operations to the Feniks company⁴⁶.

Official records and documents belonging to the government were also damaged in the fire. Only a small portion of the registers and official correspondence kept in the Hagia Sophia Mosque could be saved⁴⁷. An examination conducted to assess the extent of the burned documents resulted in a report prepared by the provincial administrative council and sent to the Ministry of the Interior. The report revealed that the following documents were destroyed: cancelled or worthless birth and death registers to belong to the Population Registry Administration, burned-out delivery records and Bulgarian identification papers among the 7,999 flawed copies of Ottoman identity documents, five record books for which no inventory record was maintained due to their cancellation⁴⁸. In addition, the number of passport document stubs and guarantee bonds could not be determined. Furthermore, it was found that within the heavily damaged Ayasofya Mosque, there were also some documents belonging to the population administration, including⁴⁹

- Seven population registers specific to Greeks,
- Two population registers belonging to Jews,
- Two discontinued order books transferred by former population registration officers,

44 *Mürüvvet*, No. 17, 4 Eylül 1306/16 Eylül 1890, p. 5-6; Ortaylı, *ibid*, p. 212.

45 “Sigorta Şirketleri”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No: 3657, 7 Eylül 1306/19 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Żuhûr*, No. 186, 7 Eylül 1306/19 Eylül 1890, p. 2; Fatih Kahya, *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Sigortacılığın Ortaya Çıkışı ve Gelişimi*, Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, İstanbul 2007, p. 80.

46 “Selânik Sigorta Kumpanyaları”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 20, 7 Eylül 1306/19 Eylül 1890, p. 5.

47 “Selânik Harik-i Haili”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 13, 31 Ağustos 1306 /12 Eylül 1890, p. 4.

48 BOA, DH.MKT. 1802/60, 12 Kanun-i sani 1306/24 Ocak 1891.

49 BOA, Şura-yı Devlet (ŞD), 2019/16, 1 Teşrin-i evvel 1306/13 Ekim 1890.

- Ten discontinued registers of future transactions until the end of 1304 AH (Islamic calendar),
- 205 cancelled Bulgarian identification papers,
- 692 cancelled Bulgarian identification papers,
- 2,376 cancelled worthless Ottoman identity documents,
- 500 worthless Bulgarian identification papers,
- Five record books,

Following the fire, to better protection of the state archives, it was decided to move the official documents to a more sheltered and spacious building against fires. Due to the lack of space in the government mansion, it was decided to rent a separate building at an annual cost of 9 liras for the preservation of the registers, documents, and packages stored in the governor's archive department⁵⁰.

The financial damage caused by the 1890 fire was extensive. As the assessment of the damages continued in the aftermath of the fire, the governorship and religious communities took action to assist the public.

2. Local and International Aids

The Governorate of Salonica and religious communities began taking necessary measures for the resettlement and sustenance of the victims of the fire. Sultan Abdulhamid II issued instructions for the distribution of tents and bread to the poor. The Ottoman government sent tents and essential supplies⁵¹. It was decided to establish a relief committee for the fire victims under the presidency of the Sultan and the vice-presidency of Governor Galip Pasha of Salonica, composed of prominent individuals and leaders of the city. Sultan Abdulhamid II initially donated 50,000 cents to the fire victims. The Mayor of London conveyed his gratitude to the Sultan for the establishment of the relief commission⁵². The relief commission held its meetings at the Salonica branch of the Ottoman Bank. The commission launched a relief campaign and approached the city's wealthy citizens to collect substantial aid. Significant donations were collected. A concert

50 BOA, DH.MKT. 1837/28, 16 Mayıs 1307/28 Mayıs 1891.

51 *Żuhûr*, No: 179, 31 Ağustos 1306/12 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

52 BOA, İrade-i Hariciye (İ.HR), 338/ 21932, 24 Ağustos 1306 /5 Eylül 1890; *Mürüvvet*, No. 19, 6 Eylül 1306/18 Eylül 1890, p. 4; *Żuhûr*, No: 177, 29 Ağustos 1306/10 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

was also scheduled in Salonica to raise funds for the fire victims⁵³. By September 15th, the amount of aid collected had been approximately 14,000 Ottoman liras⁵⁴. The District Governor of Kavala, Said Efendi, established a relief committee for the fire victims and sent 130 liras to Salonica within a few days⁵⁵.

Upon the request of the Salonica relief commission, telegrams were sent to important businessmen in Istanbul to request aid, leading to the establishment of another relief commission in the capital under the chairmanship of Minister of Justice, Rıza Pasha. The commission held a meeting at the Ottoman Bank and formed two sub-committees, one in Beyoğlu and the other in Galata⁵⁶. In the first meeting of the commission, 540 liras were collected, including 150 liras from the Ottoman Bank⁵⁷.

It was arranged that the relief commission would provide accommodation for the poor and needy⁵⁸. Hotels, inns, coffeehouses, churches, synagogues, schools, and other facilities were made available to the victims. With the efforts of Governor Galip and the relief commission, a significant portion of the fire victims, approximately 7,000 people, were temporarily housed in various buildings and vacant inns due to the approaching winter season⁵⁹. To accommodate those left exposed, it was decided to establish a tent city. Governor Galip Pasha ordered the use of tents stored in the military depots for the fire victims. Initially, 350 tents were obtained from the military, but due to their insufficiency, extra 300 tents were requested from Istanbul. With the arrival of the tents from Istanbul, the Governorate of Salonica established a tent city. Nearly 4,000 fire victims were settled in the tent city at Kışla Square⁶⁰. According to Molho, approximately 25,000 people began

53 “Selânik Hariki”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Mürüvvet*, No. 17, 4 Eylül 1306/16 Eylül 1890, pp. 5-6.

54 “Selânik Hariki”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3650, 11 Eylül 1890; “Muavenet”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 36, 23 Eylül 1306 /5 Ekim 1890, p. 3.

55 *Zuhûr*, No: 188, 9 Eylül 1306 /21 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

56 BOA, Y.A.HUS. 238/88, 27 Ağustos 1306 /8 Eylül 1890; “İane Komisyonu”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3650, 11 Eylül 1890; “İane Komisyonu”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3658, 20 Eylül 1306/ 2 Ekim 1890 p. 2; *Zuhûr*, No. 191, 13 Eylül 1306 /24 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

57 “İane”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 21, 8 Eylül 1306 /20 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

58 *Mürüvvet*, No. 17, 4 Eylül 1306/16 Eylül 1890, p. 5-6.

59 Anastasiadou, *ibid*, p. 112; *Mürüvvet*, No. 19, 6 Eylül 1306 (18 Eylül 1890), p. 4; “Muavenet”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 36, 23 Eylül 1306 (5 Ekim 1890), p. 3.

60 BOA, DH.MKT. 1757/123, 23 Ağustos 1306/4 Eylül 1890; BOA, Y. PRK.ASK, 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306 /5 Eylül 1890; *Mürüvvet*, No:7, 25 Ağustos 1306 /6 Eylül 1890, p. 2; *Mürüvvet*,

living in tent cities⁶¹. On the other hand, as winter approached, it was decided to build temporary barracks in the “Nusret” garden with the funds collected⁶². The Governorate of Salonica, in a telegram to the government, stated that permission had been granted for the construction of temporary barracks for the fire victims and requested that no more tents be sent⁶³. The plan for the barracks was prepared by the chief engineer of the province. They would be single-storey⁶⁴. About 50 barracks had been completed by September 20th⁶⁵.

Two additional sub-committees were established under the coordination of the Salonica relief commission. It was determined that these committees would meet at the Alliance Israelite School and the Gra Club on the quay to initiate efforts to meet the essential needs of the fire victims, including food and various supplies⁶⁶. The provision of food and clothing was carried out through these committees. The committees continued to collect aid regularly by touring the city with carp. The Governorate distributed daily rations of food. Due to the cold weather, the fire victims urgently needed blankets, bedding, and clothing⁶⁷. Clothing donations were also made due to the cold weather⁶⁸. The commander’s wife and sister donated a total of 43 suits of clothing⁶⁹. The Salonica Municipality and the people of Alatinizade assisted the fire victims by supplying bread, cheese, water, and candles. They also sent large vehicles from their factories to transport the belongings of the poor during and after the fire⁷⁰.

No:19, 6 Eylül 1306 /18 Eylül 1890, p. 4.

61 Molho, *ibid*, p. 105.

62 BOA, Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Umumi (Y.PRK.UM), 18/76, 3 Eylül 1306/15 Eylül 1890; BOA, Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Arzuhal Jurnal (Y.PRK.AZJ), 17/93, 3 Eylül 1306/15 Eylül 1890; *Mürüvvet*, No. 15, 2 Eylül 1306 /14 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

63 BOA, DH. MKT. 1762/83, 16 Eylül 1306/28 Eylül 1890; BOA, DH.MKT. 2028/36, 11 Teşrin-i sani 1308/23 Ekim 1892; *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No: 3646, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, p. 1-2.

64 *Mürüvvet*, No. 32, 19 Eylül 1306/1 Ekim 1890, p. 3.

65 *Mürüvvet*, No. 37, 24 Eylül 1306/6 Ekim 1890, p. 3.

66 “Selânik Hariki”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No: 3652, 1 Eylül 1306 /13 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Żuhûr*, No: 180, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 1; *Mürüvvet*, No. 17, 4 Eylül 1306/16 Eylül 1890, pp. 5-6.

67 *Mürüvvet*, No. 17, 4 Eylül 1306/16 Eylül 1890, p. 5-6.

68 “The Salonica Fire”, *The Aberdare Times*, 13 September 1890, p. 2.

69 “İane”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 51, 8 Teşrin-i evvel 1306/20 Ekim 1890, p. 3.

70 “Selânik Hariki”, *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Żuhûr*, No. 180, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

Special efforts were made to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services. The injured and sick were taken to military hospitals⁷¹. Additionally, quarantine and municipal doctors visited the areas where the fire victims were settled to provide healthcare services⁷².

While relief activities for the fire victims continued in the city, the Jewish Community took action to raise funds for the construction of new buildings. This initiative mobilized the Jewish collective. The Jewish Community organized a donation campaign to meet the needs of those affected by the fire⁷³. Through the efforts of Charles Allatini, 4,000 liras were collected from wealthy Jews in Salonica⁷⁴. Monsieur Allatini donated 600 liras, and Saiol Modiyano donated 300 liras to the Salonica relief commission⁷⁵. The Allatini family took action to get international assistance.

The expenses for the construction of new homes for the Jews were to be covered by the community. Telegrams were sent to Jewish societies in Europe to seek assistance. The Jewish Community of Salonica mobilized the international Jewish collective to gather support in the aftermath of the fire. While efforts of the community to collect aid for the fire victims continued, their situation intertwined with that of the Ashkenazi Jews who had fled from the pogroms in Corfu and Russia⁷⁶ and began arriving in the city from 1891 onwards. The Jewish Community faced new challenges with these settlements. To cope with this double tragedy and hardship, the Jews established new relief organizations in the international arena. International aid was organized for the Jews, initiated by the Allatini family. The Rothschilds in Paris contributed 10,000 francs, the Rothschilds in

71 BOA, DH.MKT. 1757/123, 23 Ağustos 1306/4 Eylül 1890; BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 64/2, 24 Ağustos 1306/5 Eylül 1890; "Selânik'te Harik Dehşeti", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3646, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, pp. 1-2.

72 "Selânik Hariki", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

73 "Selânik'te Harik Dehşeti", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3646, 25 Ağustos 1306/6 Eylül 1890, pp. 1-2.

74 Nurdan İpek, *Selanik ve İstanbul'da Yahudi Bankerler*, Yeditepe Yayınevi, İstanbul 2011, p. 120.

75 "Selânik Hariki", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3649, 29 Ağustos 1306/10 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

76 The word pogrom (погром) is derived from the Russian verb gromit, meaning to cause destruction. Literally, it refers to the practice of violence and cruelty by one ethnic group against another. In the same period, the word, which was transferred from Russian to English, began to be used to express violence and massacres against Jews. Bernard Lewis, *Semitizm ve Anti-Semitizm*, trans. Hür Güldü, Everest Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, p. 73; Yusuf Besalel, *Yahudi Tarihi*, Universal Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2000, p. 85; Şir Muhammed Dualı, *Çarlık Rusyası'nda Yahudiler*, Divan Kitap, İstanbul 2016, p. 116.

London provided 200 pounds, the Anglo-Jewish Association donated 200 pounds, the London branch of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) contributed 550 pounds, and Baron Maurice de Hirsch sent 60,000 francs in aid⁷⁷. The total amount of aid collected through international support exceeded 40,000 liras⁷⁸. While the aid was distributed to the fire victims and refugees, it was also used to finance the construction of new housing.

In European countries, relief commissions were established to gather aid for the fire victims. To collect assistance for the Salonica fire victims, a commission was created under the leadership of the Mayor of London. Among the members of the commission was Rüstem Pasha, the Ottoman Empire's Ambassador to England⁷⁹. The commission initially collected 2,750 pounds and later sent 250 pounds to the Consul of England in Salonica. The Consul delivered the aid to the Salonica Relief Commission⁸⁰. The donation commission established in Paris, the capital city of France, collected 1,200 francs, and an additional 27,300 francs collected in Marseille were sent to Salonica⁸¹. The American Ambassador also provided 10,000 francs in aid for the Salonica Jews⁸².

The Greek government facilitated the establishment of a relief commission in Athens, consisting of 23 members from the prominent figures of the city under the presidency of the Athens Metropolitan, to collect aid for the fire victims⁸³. The Greek Crown Prince, bankers, and British businessmen in the country made significant donations to the commission⁸⁴. The aid collected by the Istanbul Consulate of Greece was delivered to the Athens Relief Commission to be sent

77 İpek, *ibid*, p. 120; Anastassiadou, *ibid*, p. 113.

78 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, pp. 105-106; Anastassiadou, *ibid*, p. 113; Molho, *ibid*, p. 105.

79 BOA, Y.A.HUS. 238/107, 10 Eylül 1890 ; BOA, Hariciye Nezareti İdare (HR.İD), 1910/90, 10 Eylül 1890; "Selânik Hariki", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No: 3652, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890, p. 3; *Żuhûr*, No. 180, 1 Eylül 1306 /13 Eylül 1890, p. 1; "İane", *Miüriüvet*, No: 14, 14 Eylül 1306 /26 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

80 BOA, Y.A.HUS. 240/94, 27 Teşrin-i evvel 1306/8 Kasım 1890; "İane", *Miüriüvet*, No. 50, 13 Teşrin-i evvel 1306/25 Ekim 1890, p.2.

81 BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 19/17, 4 Teşrin-i evvel 1306,16 Ekim 1890, "İane", *Miüriüvet*, No. 46, 3 Teşrin-i evvel 1306/14 Ekim 1890, p. 4.

82 "Selânik Harik-i Malumi", *Miüriüvet*, No. 24, 11 Eylül 1306/23 Eylül 1890, p. 4; "İane", *Miüriüvet*, No. 21, 8 Eylül 1306/20 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

83 "Selânik Harik-i İanesi", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3654, 4 Eylül 1306/16 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

84 "Selânik Hariki", *Tercümân-ı Hakikat*, No. 3656, 6 Eylül 1306/18 Eylül 1890, p. 1.

to Salonica⁸⁵. After getting informed of the fire, the Greek government sent two warships to assist the Greeks⁸⁶. The Athens Red Cross Society sent three hospital tents because the Greek hospital was damaged in the fire, 100 tents, 460 blankets, biscuits, and oil, as well as aid worth 30,000 francs for fire victims. The aid was delivered to the Governorate of Salonica⁸⁷. Greek banker Andreas Syggros promised to contribute to the construction of the buildings belonging to the Salonica Greek Community that were destroyed in the fire and arrived in Salonica by a ship provided by the Greek government⁸⁸. Singrosi donated 500 French francs to the commission to be distributed to the fire victims⁸⁹.

Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria also donated 20,000 francs for the fire victims in Salonica and the flood disaster in Edirne, with half of the money being sent to the Salonica donation commission⁹⁰. The Prince of Montenegro also donated 10,000 florins⁹¹. Some countries made significant donations to the fire victims through their consulates in Salonica. The consuls of Austria-Hungary and Italy contributed 1,000 liras to the donation commission⁹².

International aid played a significant role in alleviating the financial burden, as the communities were responsible for the settlement of their people. These aid efforts were particularly utilized in areas such as the construction of new housing, schools, and places of worship.

3. Effects of Fire on the Development and Transformation of the City

The 1890 fire provided an opportunity for urban transformation and marked an important phase of the modernization of Salonica. The fire resulted in significant

85 “Selânik Harikzedegâni”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 28, 15 Eylül 1306/27 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

86 “Salonica in Ruins”, *The Morning Call*, 5 September 1890, p. 8.

87 BOA, Y.A.HUS. 238/92, 28 Ağustos 1306/9 Eylül 1890; *Žuhûr*, No. 180, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1380, p. 3; “Selânik Harik-i Malumi”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 14, 14 Eylül 1306/26 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

88 BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası (HR.TO), 14/76, 19 Eylül 1890; BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi (DH.ŞFR), 145/96, 13 Eylül 1306 /25 Eylül 1890; *Mürüvvet*, No. 24, 11 Eylül 1306/23 Eylül 1890, p. 4

89 BOA, Yıldız Perakende Evrakı Sadaret Maruzatı (Y.PRK.A), 6/6, 14 Eylül 1306 /26 Eylül 1890; Selânik Harik-i Malumi”, *Mürüvvet*, No: 24, 11 Eylül 1306/23 Eylül 1890, p. 4.

90 BOA, İrade Bulgaristan (İ.MTZ.(04)), 15/893, 1 Eylül 1306/13 Eylül 1890; “İane”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 71, 28 Teşrin-i evvel 1306/9 Kasım 1890, p. 2.

91 BOA, HR.TO. 49/41, 4 Mart 1307/16 Mart 1891.

92 *Žuhûr*, No:183, 4 Eylül 1306 /16 Eylül 1890, p. 2.

changes and transformations in the urban fabric of the city⁹³. When the maps of the city before the fire were examined, it was seen that the fire eradicated a large irregular-shaped area in the heart of the city. The burned areas mainly consisted of Jewish neighbourhoods, such as Baru, Leviye, Hagia Sophia, Kaldırgöç, certain parts of Pulya, and the vicinity of the Cathedral, as well as the surrounding Greek neighbourhood⁹⁴. The primary cause of the fire spread was the presence of wooden structures. The fire-ravaged area underwent a significant urban transformation. The new reconstruction encouraged the use of masonry structures in the urban fabric, resulting in a more permanent urban landscape⁹⁵. All these regulations were implemented by the 1882 Building/Urban Planning Law.

During the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the reconstruction and improvement of the appearance of cities were fundamental aspects of urban planning activities. The 1882 Building Law shaped urban planning policies. Various building and urban planning regulations had been issued before the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, but they were consolidated and finalized during this period, remaining in effect until the end of the empire. With the Building/Urban Planning Law of November 5, 1882, the 1863 Roads and Building Regulation, the 1863 Taxation and Levies Regulation for Various Types of Buildings, the 1863 Survey Taxes Regulation, the Istanbul and the Three Cities (Üsküdar, Galata, and Eyüp) External Facade Construction Regulation were rendered invalid, and the provisions of all regulations related to building and urban planning were consolidated under a single law with some amendments⁹⁶. The 1882 Building/Urban Planning Law, consisting of 98 articles and one provisional article, covering various aspects, including the width and direction of streets, the organization of burned areas, projections on building facades facing the streets, building height, prohibited repairs, permit certificates, building construction and repair taxes, survey taxes, the characteristics of buildings to be constructed in Istanbul and the three cities, and sanctions for non-compliance with the law⁹⁷. The third section of the law (articles 20-25) regulated urban planning activities in the burned areas, while the

93 Alexandra Yerolympos- Vassilis Colonas, “Kozmopolit Bir Kentleşme”, *Selânik 1850-1918*, pandectist: Gilles Veinstein, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2014, p. 207.

94 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, p. 106.

95 İlhan Tekeli, “Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Kentsel Dönüşüm”, *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 4, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1985, p. 882.

96 Kirpi, *ibid*, p. 67- 78; *Düstür*, Zeyl 3, Mahmud Bey Matbaası, Dersaadet 1300, p. 2.

97 *Düstür*, Zeyl 3, pp. 2-20.

sixth section (articles 38-48) addressed precautions to be taken against fires⁹⁸.

The third section of the Building/Urban Planning Law was related to urban development activities in the areas affected by the fire. The law included provisions regarding the form and organization of streets as a fire prevention measure⁹⁹. It was envisaged that the construction of intersecting streets at right angles and their differentiation based on location, the construction of masonry buildings around rectangular building blocks, and the regulation of areas to be opened for new development or damage as a result of the fire would be governed by the rules specified in this section¹⁰⁰. When an entire neighbourhood or an area with more than ten houses bounded by roads was completely burned, that area would be redivided into field-like plot. A map would be drawn, considering the pre-existing roads in the area and the area of each plot. A new division would be made, taking the previous boundaries and measurements of each plot into consideration, with an emphasis on making them square or rectangular in shape. The owners would be provided with a documented notification of the new arrangements through a mapped certificate (Article 20). Dead-end streets in the reorganized building blocks would be opened or closed and divided according to the situation of the area (Article 21). The implementation of the map mentioned in the twentieth article would be carried out according to the twelfth article (Article 22). In cases where it was necessary to open new streets, expand existing ones, or align them properly in built and unbuilt areas, the municipality would arrange and notify the relevant plot and property owners with a special document. Objections to the maps had to be submitted within fifteen days (Article 12). Due to the block reorganization, each plot owner would be allowed to transfer the debris in their plot to their new parcel (Article 23). Buildings that were not prohibited from repairs were exempted from the regulations specified in Article 20. However, the provisions of Articles 10 and 11, which determine the form and direction of streets, would still apply (Article 24). When, as a result of road opening, alignment, expansion works, and regulation activities, a plot became unsuitable and irregular for building a single dwelling, the adjacent plot owners would be obliged to provide an appropriate amount of land for the construction of the smaller and irregular plot owner's

98 *Düstâr*, Zeyl 3, pp. 7,10.

99 *Düstâr*, Zeyl 3, pp. p. 2.

100 Afife Batur, "Batılılaşma Dönemi Osmanlı Mimarlığı", *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 4, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1985, p. 1048; Gençler, "19. Yüzyılda Kentsel Dönüşüm Dinamikleri: İzmir ve Selanik (1840-1910)", p. 51.

dwelling. If the small plot owner refused, they would be offered to sell the plot to the larger plot owner. If no agreement was reached between the two parties, the municipality would purchase the small plot at the estimated value (Article 25)¹⁰¹.

The sixth section, which covered measures to be taken regarding fires, included provisions such as the requirement for houses to be constructed of masonry and the absence of wood, except for items like cabinets, the use of stone and brick in stove construction, guidelines for the installation of pipes passing through wooden structures, the construction of chimneys using stone and brick, regulations concerning the height and proximity of chimneys to wooden buildings, the placement of metal materials in front of stoves and coffee stoves, the condition of metal materials passing through the wood, and the requirement for houses to be entirely masonry. It also specified that ovens, baths, factories, and shops where the fire was used should be surrounded by walls and have doors covered with sheet metal¹⁰².

These regulations gave local authorities an important opportunity to exercise their legal powers after the fire of 1890. The city centre needed rearrangement, and new areas for redevelopment were now available. The Municipality of Salonica took action by initiating the preparation of maps and plans for the burned area, by the 1882 Building Law¹⁰³. However, the municipality refused to provide construction materials to the homeless victims of the disaster. In previous practices, when people had been provided with construction materials, they would rebuild their properties in the same location. However, the municipality did not do this and imposed a ban on all construction activities in the affected areas until reconstruction plans for the burned areas were established¹⁰⁴. The Municipality of Salonica prepared a new plan in compliance with the new urban planning law for the devastated areas. As per the law, changes were made in the construction materials, and it was decided that houses should be built with stone and brick, and roofs should be made of tiles to prevent fires¹⁰⁵. The plan prepared by the municipality aimed to create regular

101 *Düstür*, Zeyl 3, pp. 5-13; Kirpi, *ibid*, p. 84.

102 *Düstür*, Zeyl 3, pp. 10-13.

103 "Selânik Hariki Malumi", *Mürüvvet*, No. 15, 2 Eylül 1306/14 Eylül 1890, p. 3.

104 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, pp. 81-105.

105 Alexandra Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations in the Balkans 1820-192*, University Studio Press, Salonica 1996, pp. 21-85.

streets and buildings¹⁰⁶. It had been desired to implement the plan prepared by the municipality immediately after the fire¹⁰⁷. However, it took approximately two years to implement the plan.

In early 1892, the municipality presented the new plan to the public. Engineers redesigned the streets according to a square and rectangular pattern, creating a grid system and six parallel streets running towards the harbour in the heart of the traditional city. Streets and iconic structures were named subsequently¹⁰⁸. The fire sites were organized, and parcel division was carried out. The resulting parcels were distributed to their original owners based on the size of their properties and the modifications made to widen the streets¹⁰⁹. Dead-end streets were removed, and 12-18 meter wide streets were opened in tcentrey center. The new urban planning law allowed for determining building heights based on the width of the streets, resulting in the decision to construct 3-4-story masonry buildings in the newly developed areas¹¹⁰. The area to be built according to the new plan was divided into 10 new building zones, each with a large number of newly numbered blocks. The new plan envisioned a systematic street layout, with buildings arranged to face the main street.¹¹¹ Reconstruction began with the completion of the plan. Schools and places of worship were primarily built in their original locations before the fire. The remaining area was utilized for the construction of new-style houses and businesses by the 1882 Building Law. In the newly developed area, the density of buildings remained low due to the presence of wide streets¹¹². The largest urban redevelopment in Salonica took place after the fire, contributing to urban transformation in terms of widening streets, constructing new roads, and other aspects. When the city map based on the new plans was checked, it was observed that linear structures and square blocks were formed¹¹³. According to Gounaris, the number of houses in Salonica decreased from 12,000

106 “Selânik”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 32, 19 Eylül 1306 /1 Ekim 1890, p. 3.

107 “Selânik”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 37, 24 Eylül 1306 /6 Ekim 1890, p. 3.

108 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, p. 106.

109 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, p. 107.; Gençer, “19. Yüzyılda Kentsel Dönüşüm Dinamikleri: İzmir ve Selanik (1840-1910)”, p. 51.

110 Gençer, “19 Yüzyılda İzmir ve Selanik’te Kentsel Dönüşüm: Rıhtım ve Limanların İnşası”, p. 37

111 Angelos Kastritis, *Mapping Port Towns from the 16th to 19th Centuries: Stockholm and Salonica*, Uppsala Universitet Historiska Institutionen, 2016, p. 43.

112 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, pp. 107-108.

113 Stein, *ibid*, p. 53; İpek, *ibid*, p. 12.

to 8,300¹¹⁴. The destroyed neighbourhoods were redesigned, narrow streets were widened, infrastructure services were completed, and a new water network was established¹¹⁵.

In the reconstructed area, more streets stretched from the sea, to the quay. The streets of Pulya Havres and Hagia Sophia Mosque connected the beach to the long road. This road stretched up to the hills of the Muslim quarter. A large square was opened in front of the Hagia Sophia mosque. The biggest change in the historical centre came about with the re-planning of the burned areas around Hagia Sophia and Metropolis, which were between Egnatia Street and the quay¹¹⁶. After that, Hagia Sophia became known as the street of the rich and beautiful house. Properties here changed owners and former residents moved to other areas¹¹⁷. The fire severely affected the cultural heritage. It had destroyed structures that had stood for centuries¹¹⁸.

114 Basil C. Gounaris, "Salonica", *Review*, Vol. XVI/No. 4, 1993, p. 501.

115 Kastiris, *ibid*, p. 58.

116 Alexsandra Yerolympas, "Salonica Before and After", p. 5.

117 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, pp. 107-108.

118 "Salonica in Ruins", *The Morning Call*, 5 September 1890, p. 8.



Plan1: Salonica city centre before and after the fire of 1890

(Source: Meropi Anastasiadou, *Salonica*, p. 117)

It would have taken a long time for the municipality to prepare maps of the burned areas, parcel them out, and widen the streets following the Building Law of 1882, that is, prepare the areas for construction. Certain housing projects were required in urban planning to help homeless refugees fleeing pogroms from Russia, as well as thousands of fire victims. It was decided to establish new neighbourhoods outside the city for this purpose. The amount of aid collected from Jewish wealthy individuals, organizations, and institutions internationally exceeded 40,000 Turkish liras. Half of the money was distributed to those affected

by the fire and immigrants, while the other half was allocated to the plots of land to be used for constructing new houses. The Jewish community decided to acquire new land to build new homes for those left homeless and the immigrants. Since the plots of land in the city centre were expensive, the community canalized to the areas around Salonica¹¹⁹. With the donations allocated for the purpose, two plots of land were purchased: one measuring 19,740 square meters in Kalamaria in the eastern region of the city, and the other measuring 35,480 square meters in Vardar, across from the railway station in the northern part of the city¹²⁰. The housing to be built on these plots was designed by the provincial chief engineer. Emin Lütü Efendi, Agrad Alantini, Samuel Modiyonu, and Saiyaz Efendi were appointed by the municipality to oversee the construction process according to the plan¹²¹. The initial survey determined that 400 houses would be built for 20,000 liras. Each of these houses was planned to be two stories high, with two rooms each. According to the plan, this neighbourhood would have spacious and open streets, a square, and a market¹²².

Vardar-Hirsch and Kalamaria became the first examples of planned building projects in the city. Low-cost social housing was constructed for the fire victims and impoverished Jews arriving from Russia. The construction of social housing neighbourhoods was a collaboration between the community and the municipality¹²³. With the aid received, new grid-planned neighbourhoods were created outside the city walls, both to the east and west¹²⁴. Two new sites were built to accommodate two families in each house, as the demand for housing was high¹²⁵. Most of the Jews gradually moved to the newly constructed residential areas in the eastern and western parts of the city. Wealthy ones, on the other hand, built mansions along the coastline in the eastern part of the city¹²⁶.

119 Anastassiadou, *ibid*, p. 114.

120 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, p. 106; Molho, *ibid*, p. 106.

121 “Selânik Gazetesinde Okunmuşdur”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 50, 7 Teşrin-i evvel 1306 / 19 Ekim 1890, p. 4.

122 “Selânik”, *Mürüvvet*, No. 17, 4 Eylül 1306/16 Eylül 1890, pp. 5-6.

123 Nora Lafi, “The Municipality of Salonica between Old Regime, the Ottoman Reforms and the Transition From Empire to Nation State”, *Proceedings of the “Salonica 1912-2012” Conference, Municipality of Salomica*, 2013, p. 80; Gençer, “19 Yüzyılda İzmir ve Selanik’te Kentsel Dönüşüm: Rıhtım ve Limanların İnşası”, p. 37; Devin E. Naar, *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece*, Stanford University Press, Stanford California 2016, p. 74.

124 Lewkowicz, *ibid*, p. 140

125 Dimitriadis, *ibid*, p. 108; 1311 (*Hicri*) Selânik Vilayet Salnamesi, p. 225.

126 Stein, *ibid*, pp. 53-54.

Until the 1890 fire, the majority of Jewish neighbourhoods were located in the city center and around the port. The distribution of Jews within the city changed with the construction of the new neighbourhoods. The new residential areas led to the emergence of new patterns of social stratification. Following the fire, bourgeois suburbs developed in the southern part of the city where Jews, Muslims, and Christians lived. These suburbs were accompanied by middle-class neighbourhoods¹²⁷. The division based on religion and ethnicity, which continued to characterize the old city centre, underwent a transformation¹²⁸. As the city expanded, the gap between the rich and the poor widened¹²⁹. The poor moved to the newly established neighbourhoods outside the city, and people began to live according to their income levels, in addition to their ethnic and religious similarities. This new distribution also symbolized a departure from tradition¹³⁰. The lower classes congregated in the outskirts of the city, forming the first suburbs that carried social rather than ethnic characteristics. On the other hand, the city centre, which had rid itself of its negative image, became suitable for accommodating new institutions and structures such as hotels, cafes, and luxury stores. These were the structures that emerged as a result of new consumption habits and lifestyles¹³¹. Socioeconomic differentiation became more evident with new reconstruction in the city. It can be argued that the social transformation and restructuring experienced by Salonica had significant effects on the relationships between communities.

Conclusion

Salonica was an Ottoman city and served as one of the most important port cities of the empire. Fires were a common occurrence in daily life in Salonica. While small fires had become ordinary, rapidly spreading large fires resulted in catastrophic disasters. The primary reason for the rapid spread of fires and the difficulty in combating them was the prevalence of wooden structures. Narrow and dead-end streets where these structures were located, along with water scarcity, hindered effective fire-fighting efforts. To combat fires, various regulations and laws were enacted, and urban planning measures were implemented. Additionally, local administrations were established.

127 Hastaoglou, "A Mediterranean City in Transition: Salonica Between The Two World Wars", p. 495.

128 Yerolympos, "Salonica Before ve and After", pp.4-5.

129 Mazower, *ibid*, p. 334.

130 Yerolympos- Colonas, *ibid*, p. 208.

131 Anastasiadou, *ibid*,p. 177; Tekeli, *ibid*, p. 881.

One of the fundamental responsibilities of the municipalities, which began to be established in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, was to combat fires. This responsibility also entailed facilitating the transformation of cities. The establishment of the Municipality of Salonica in 1869 accelerated urban transformation. In this transformation process, the fires that occurred in the second half of the 19th century played a significant role in the urban transformation of Salonica. The municipality, citing the high cost of expropriation, did not transform certain areas but instead intervened in these areas after fires, facilitating their redevelopment. It was understood that Salonica underwent piecemeal renewal after each fire.

The fire of 1890 was a humanitarian catastrophe. However, it marked a turning point for Salonica and contributed significantly to the transformation of the city. A large part of the city centre, where Jews had lived for generations, was destroyed because of the fire. The municipality, utilizing the authority granted to it by the municipal law, prohibited construction in these areas where impoverished Jews resided and prepared new plans for the region. The municipality devised plans for the fire-ravaged area by the Urban Planning Law of 1882. A grid-based system was established in the city centre based on the modern urban planning structures. After the devastation caused by the fire, a large portion of the city center was reconstructed. The city plans revealed that the city centre became more planned. The orderly layout of the streets was crucial for effective fire-fighting efforts. The newly constructed areas by modern urban planning and zoning regulations represented one of the most significant examples of the emerging urban planning concept in the Ottoman Empire. It should also be noted that the new structures that emerged in the city centre, such as hotels, cafes, theatres, and commercial buildings, brought about changes in consumption habits and social relationships.

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