

A STUDY ON SCABIES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE WITH REGARD TO ARCHIVE RESOURCES

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Abstract

Scabies is a non-fatal contagious skin condition that can harm a person because of the itching it causes. Known to exist since ancient times, scabies was identified by Italian Pharmacist Giovanni Cosimo Bonomo in 1687. It is not known when the first-time scabies occurred in the Ottoman Empire. In this study, in the light of the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry, scabies was in the Ottoman Empire. Research shows that the first record of scabies in the Ottoman Archive of the Prime Ministry was 1889. On the other hand, it is understood that the records on scabies disease are quite limited in the Ottoman Archive. The archive data shows that scabies is common, especially in Ottoman prisons. In addition to prisons, there are a few examples in the archive that indicate scabies exists in schools. In addition, these records indicate that scabies accelerated in World War I and spread in Anatolia after the aforementioned war.

Keywords: *Scabies, Itching, The Ottoman Empire, Prisons, Archival.*

Öz

Arşiv Kaynakları Işığında Osmanlı Devleti'nde Yaşanan Uyuz Hastalığı Üzerine Bir İnceleme
Uyuz hastalığı ölümcül olmayan, ancak meydana getirdiği kaşıntıdan dolayı kişiyi canından bezdiren bulaşıcı bir deri hastalığıdır. İlkçağlardan beri var olduğu bilinen uyuz, 1687 yılında İtalyan Eczacı Giovanni Cosimo Bonomo tarafından tanımlanmıştır. Uyuz hastalığının Osmanlı Devleti'nde ilk ne zaman ortaya çıktığı bilinmemektedir. Bu çalışmada; Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi ışığında Osmanlı Devleti'nde uyuz hastalığı ele alınmıştır. Yapılan araştırmada Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi'nde uyuz hastalığına dair tutulan ilk kaydın 1889 yılına ait olduğu tespit edilmektedir. Öte yandan Osmanlı Arşivi'nde, uyuz hastalığına dair kayıtların oldukça sınırlı olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Arşivden elde edilen veriler, uyuz hastalığının özellikle Osmanlı hapishanelerinde yaygın bir şekilde görüldüğünü göstermektedir. Hapishanelerin yanı sıra arşivde,

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okullarda da uyuz hastalığının olduğunu gösteren birkaç örnek mevcuttur. Tüm bunlara ilaveten söz konusu kayıtlar uyuzun, Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nda ivme kazandığını ve mezkûr savaş sonrasında da Anadolu'da yayıldığına işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Uyuz, Kaşıntı, Osmanlı Devleti, Hapishaneler, Arşiv*

Introduction

Scabies disease is an infectious skin disease that progresses with itching rashes, is transmitted from person to person, is frequently seen in mass living spaces and mostly in winter but can also be seen in spring.¹ Scabies *amili*, which is an infectious and itching disease, is a parasite called *sarcoptes scabiei*, in other words, insect.² So much so that the terms sarcopt, and scabies are derived from the Greek words sarx (meat), coptein (cutting) and scabere (itching)³ The transmission of scabies, which is transmitted from human to human by close physical contact, to another person takes about 15-20 minutes. On the other hand, the common use of personal belongings such as bedding, clothes, and towels is one of the factors that facilitate the transmission and spread of scabies.⁴ In a person who has scabies for the first time, it may take up to 2-6 weeks for the symptoms to start. However, in a person who has previously been exposed to scabies, symptoms occur within 1-4 days.⁵ Insects, which are invisible but can be selected with a microscope, invade human skin and cause disease. Scabies insects, which are 0.3 to 0.5 mm in size and have eight legs⁶, live in tunnels by opening tunnels in the skin. These tunnels are seen as zigzag lines when viewed from the outside. The sarcopticide inside the tunnel moves especially at night and in the heat, causing serious itching. Itching is usually seen in the fingers, wrists, armpits, elbows, and groin, but it can also affect the whole body.⁷

Non-fatal scabies disease is seen in domestic and wild animals as well as in humans. Generally, in animals caught with scabies, hair is lost, and skin becomes crusty and itching. However, this disease, which is transmitted to everyone in contact with sick animals, is common especially in animal caregivers.

Scabies, which has been known to exist since ancient times, was defined by the Italian pharmacist Giovanni Cosimo Bonomo in 1687⁸. It is not known when scabies, the first human disease whose cause is known, emerged in Ottoman Empire. As a result of the research, it was determined that the first record of the scabies case in the Presidential Ottoman Archive belonged to 1889. In this study, scabies disease will be discussed in Ottoman Empire based on the documents in Presidency Ottoman Archive.⁹

¹ Şimşek et al 2019, p. 205; Unat 1975, p.11.

² Sağlık Ansiklopedisi, p. 552.

³ Şimşek et al 2019, p. 205.

⁴ <https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/>

⁵ <https://www.cambridge>.

⁶ Kazan & Demirsoy 2020, p. 81.

⁷ Sağlık Ansiklopedisi, p. 552-553. Hicks & Elston 2009, p. 279; <https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/>.; <https://www.cdc.gov>.

⁸ Ünver & Turgay 2006, p.78; Falay & Gürel, 2017, p. 143.

⁹ As a result of the literature research, it was determined that there was no study on mange disease in the Ottoman Empire.

Scabies Disease in Ottoman Empire, Treatment Methods and Measures Taken

As stated above, it is not known when the first scabies case was seen in Ottoman Empire. However, German Stephan Gerlach, who came to Istanbul in the second half of the 16th century in 1577, in his work "The Diary of Turkey (Türkiye Günlüğü)", in which he wrote his impressions in Istanbul; *In Constantinople, no one knows what "Nikris (gou/gut)" disease, stroke and stroke are. I've never seen a leper, scabies, or bald person around. There are no children exposed to these diseases, only chicken pox.* This observation of Gerlach suggests that there was no or rarely seen scabies disease in Istanbul in 1577.¹⁰

Evliya Çelebi, who lives in the 17th century, also mentions scabies disease and ways to get rid of this disease in his ten-volume "Travel Book (Seyahatname)". In his travel book, Çelebi states that the outer of skins of the scabies patients who come to the "Çekirge and Kükürtlü hot springs (kaplıca)" in Bursa start to peel like onion membranes, and their skin turns into like pearls and has a silver body. Çelebi, who wrote that sulfur water is good for scabies, states that expert bath attendants serve for scabies patients in "Sulphurous Hot Spring (Kükürtlü Kaplıcası)". In his travel book, Evliya Çelebi also stated that Bolu, Niksar, Erzurum-Ilıca, Ekşisu in Bosnia and Eğri hot springs in Hungary are good for scabies disease.¹¹

Besides Evliya Çelebi, it is seen that Ali Ufki, one of the important composers of the 17th century, mentioned the treatment of scabies in his work called "Mecmua-i Sâz-ü Söz. Ufki", in his work; for the treatment of scabies, first suggested that 7 walnut kernels, a handful of Hacilar sulfur and a handful of sifted ash from laurel oil, should be pounded in a mortar and turned into an ointment. Then, he stated that applying the prepared ointment after the scabies patient bathed in the hammam would cure scabies. One of the famous physicians of the Ottoman Empire, it is seen that Dr. Besim Ömer Pasha also mentioned scabies and its treatment in his work "Hıfz-ı Sıhhat (Health)" dated 1898.¹² In his work, Ömer Pasha defined scabies disease as "a disease specific to the skin and caused by a small insect called *acarus* entering the skin". In the work in which the scabies insect is depicted, it is stated that sulfur ointment, oil, and gas oil used are very effective in the treatment of the disease and in the elimination of scabies.¹³

Scabies cases in Ottoman Empire

As stated before, because of the research conducted in the Presidential Ottoman Archive, which was the source of the study, it was determined that the first record of the scabies case belonged to 1889. In the record, it is seen that a telegram was sent from "the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Dâhiliye Nezareti)" to "the Ministry of Medicine and Health (Tıbbiye Nezareti)", in which scabies disease was also mentioned. In the telegram, it was stated that fever, malaria, dysentery, and scabies diseases occurred in Adilcevaz Town

¹⁰ Gerlach, 2007, p. 681.

¹¹ Ertaş & Eğinim 2011, p. 95.

¹² Ustukarçı, & Toprak, 2018, pp. 187-218.

¹³ Besim Ömer 1315, pp. 284-285.

and these diseases increased day by day and necessary measures were requested to be taken. Apart from the said record, it can be determined that there are some archive records of scabies disease. The archive records examined show that scabies disease was widespread in Ottoman prisons. It is understood that in addition to prisons, schools are also one of the places where scabies disease is seen. In addition, it is understood from the archive records that scabies disease gained momentum or was recorded especially during the First World War.

Scabies cases in Ottoman prisons

It is inevitable that scabies, which is one of the infectious diseases, can be seen widely in crowded and closed environments. Without a doubt, one of these places is prisons. Ottoman rulers kept infectious diseases under control by applying quarantine during the periods when infectious diseases increased due to the intensity in prisons. However, the lack of water in prisons and the inadequacy of baths caused inmates to be unable to bathe. This situation was an invitation for the prisoners to catch infectious diseases and to spread infectious diseases.¹⁴

In the process that started with “Tanzimat Era”, studies were initiated for the rehabilitation of prisons. Accordingly, in 1879, the Ministry of Justice presented a briefing to Abdulamid II, the sultan of the period, for the rehabilitation of prisons. In the regulation dated 1880 on the administration of detention houses and prisons in the Ottoman Empire, articles related to health services to be carried out in prisons were also included. In the aforementioned regulation, it was emphasized that doctors should examine the patients in the hospital every day, the order and cleanliness of the hospital in every way, the treatment of patients, and the isolation of those who are infected from other patients. In the regulation, the beds of the sick would also consist of a cushion, a mattress, a pillow, and a bed sheet, and one or two comforters as appropriate. The cover of the cushion and mattress would be changed at the time determined by the doctor and in any case in the event of death. The aforementioned regulation consisted of legally binding articles that form the basis of health services in prisons in the provinces, especially in Istanbul. With the regulation, it was determined how the operation would be carried out in the fight against infectious diseases in prisons. However, despite all these efforts, the desired level for improving the health conditions of prisons has not been reached.¹⁵ It is understood that scabies, which is one of the infectious diseases, was widespread in Ottoman prisons in the archive documents that led to the study.

The archive records examined show that scabies disease is experienced especially in prisons and detention centers where the crowd is at a high level and there is a lack of cleanliness as well as misery. For example, in a telegram sent from the Rumelia Protocol to Shkodra Province on 27 August 1903, it was stated that scabies disease occurred in Durres Prison and that the crowd should be reduced to prevent the spread of the disease; for this, either the said prison should be expanded or some of the prisoners should be

¹⁴ Şen 2007, p.102; Tüzün 2021, p.1929.

¹⁵ Tiryaki 2021 p. 431-432.

transferred to the central province prison.¹⁶ In the response sent by Haydar Bey, the Governor and Commander of Shkodra Province, it is stated that the Central Province Prison is already crowded, on the other hand, if the prisoners who are infected by scabies come to the province prison, the prisoners here will be infected with scabies and it would be appropriate to expand the Durres Prison.¹⁷ In another letter sent from the Isparta Lieutenant governorship to the Prisons Directorate, it was stated that there were scabies cases in Isparta Prison, the disease could not be treated properly due to the extraordinary crowd of the prison, in other words, there was no ward in which inmates could be kept in. In the article, it was also stated that a ward in a women's prison would be reserved for quarantine since there was no place for quarantine, so an allocation of 476 kurush was essential.¹⁸ In addition to Isparta Prison, it is seen that a similar situation has been experienced in the women's prison section of the General Prison in Istanbul. Because in the letter sent from the Ministry of Justice to the Directorate of Prisons, it was stated that, based on the prosecutor's report, the women's section of the General Prison had four wards, one ward was used as a hospital, and 80 prisoners and inmates stayed in the remaining three wards, and this situation caused intensity; it was stated that it would be appropriate to transfer the prisoners or inmates to another place. In the letter sent by the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Internal Affairs: It is stated that the number of the prison was 95, that the scabies disease was becoming more and more widespread among inmate women, and that the majority of inmate women had a dress and demanded that necessary measures be taken.¹⁹ In a letter sent from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it was stated that there were children who had scabies in the Dersaadet Dete Center, and that they had continuous personal cleaning for the treatment of children who were infected by the disease, and that the children who came to the detention center from outside were also quarantined and tried to prevent the disease.²⁰

One of the most important rules for the treatment of scabies is that people who have scabies frequently take a bath and change their clothes to get rid of the disease. However, it is understood from the archive documents that most of Ottoman prisons and detention centers do not have a bathhouse and a significant part of the prisoners have a single dress due to poverty. Because in the letter sent from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Finance on 19 January 1908, it was stated that scabies disease was seen in Aydın Central Province Prison and the disease spread day by day, and it was stated that it was necessary to build a bathhouse to prevent the spread of scabies. In addition, since the building construction and repair works were transferred to the treasury budget, the Ministry of Finance was asked to cover the necessary allocation for the construction of the bath.²¹ In a letter sent from the Governorship of Istanbul to the Directorate of Prisons on 7 December 1913, it was stated that cholera and scabies disease was seen in the

¹⁶ BOA, (TFR.I. İŞ), 3/237, 18 Recep 1321 (10 October 1903).

¹⁷ BOA, TFR.I. İŞ, 3/243, 22 Recep 1321, (14 October 1903).

¹⁸ BOA, (DH.MB.HPS.M), 12/45, 4 Cemazeyilahir 1332 (30 April 1914).

¹⁹ BOA, (DH.MB.HPS), 106/10, 28 Cemazeyilevvel 1334 (2 April 1916).

²⁰ BOA, DH.MB.HPS, 76/48, 18 Cemazeyilevvel 1335 (12 March 1917).

²¹ BOA, (DH.MKT), 1225/ 49, 15 Zilhicce 1325 (19 January 1908).

General Prison of İstanbul, and it was stated that it was necessary to supply new clean clothes to the poor prisoners in order to prevent the spread of scabies disease. In such a way, in the aforementioned article, it was stated that approximately one hundred prisoners had only a dress; therefore, the prisoners had to wear the same dirty dress all the time, and it was pointed out that new and clean clothes were an indispensable need, and in order to meet the aforementioned need, it was stated that a total of six thousand kurush was required for one hundred people at the unit price of sixty kurush per person. In addition, it was stated in the letter that the prisoners to be transferred to the General Prison in order to prevent the infection of scabies to other prisoners should first stay in quarantine in the prison, the prisoners should be released after the supervision of the doctor in order to relieve the crowd in the prison, and an allowance should be allocated for the repair of the bath in the place of accommodation and the women's part of the prison and the hospital part.²²

It is possible to say that baths and personal cleaning are very important in eliminating scabies disease and preventing the spread of the disease. In fact, in a letter sent from the Kütahya Lieutenant governorship to the Directorate of Prisons, it was stated that there was scabies disease among the prisoners in Kütahya Men and Women Prison, and the doctor recommended that the prisoners should take a bath and that their belongings be disinfected in order to prevent the spread of scabies. In the aforementioned article, it is stated that there are only two baths in the bazaar in Kütahya, but the bath owners are reluctant to accept the prisoners, on the other hand, the prisoners may escape by taking advantage of the crowd while going to the bath, instead, it would be more appropriate to transform one of the wards in the said prison into a bath; it is stated that it would be appropriate to send an allocation of 21,752 kurush to transform the ward into a bath.²³ It is understood that it is the right decision of the Kütahya Lieutenant Governorship to turn a ward in prison into a bathhouse in case of prisoners' escape. In fact, in a letter sent from the Ministry of Justice to the Directorate of Prisons on 12 December 1919, it was stated that there was scabies disease in the Kayseri Prison, and that the prisoners were taken to the bath to prevent the spread of the disease, but twenty prisoners escaped by taking advantage of this situation. It is understood from the archive records that the jailbreakers in question were captured and the necessary measures were taken against the people who caused them. In fact, in the letter sent from the Kayseri Lieutenant governorship to the Directorate of Prisons, it was stated that eleven of the escaped prisoners were captured and delivered to the prison and an investigation was initiated against the gendarmerie sergeant who caused the escape.²⁴ In the letter sent from the Governorship of İstanbul to the Directorate of Prisons on April 4, 1918, it was stated that scabies disease was seen among the prisoners in Dersaadet Murder and Misdemeanor Detention Center, that doctors advised to continuously wash the laundry of the prisoners in order to eradicate the disease; and that the prisoners were poor and had no clothes to wear other than the existing clothes on them. In the aforementioned article, it is stated

²² BOA, *DH.MB.HPS*, 72/26, 27 Muharrem 1332 (26 December 1913).

²³ BOA, *DH.MB.HPS.M*, 55/28, 22 Zilkade 1337 (22 August 1919).

²⁴ BOA, *DH.MB.HPS*, 81/41, 27 Rabiulahir 1338 (19 January 1920).

that 540 TL allocation is required for detainees who are poor to buy sixty suits at nine TL.²⁵ In the report dated 28 June 1918 prepared by Chief Civil Inspector Hüsni Bey, who was assigned to inspect Izmit Prison, it was stated that some of the 32 prisoners who stayed in Izmit Central Prison were infected with scabies disease.²⁶ In addition, in a letter sent from the Bolu Lieutenant governorship to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on August 6, 1911, it was stated that 1,300 kurush allowance was given for the Bolu Lieutenant governorship and the prisons within it, but scabies disease was seen in Bartın Prison, which was affiliated to the governorship, and 600 kurush was already spent from the existing allowance to prevent the spread of the mentioned disease.²⁷ The fact that a significant part of the allowance given to the Bolu Lieutenant governorship for prisons was spent to eliminate scabies disease is extremely important in terms of showing that scabies disease is quite common in Bartın Prison.

In the archive documents that led to the study, it is seen that in order to prevent scabies disease, in addition to requesting allocation to prisoners and detainees for reasons such as construction baths, and new clothes etc., in some records, only "preventing the spread of scabies disease" is justified and an allocation request is made. For example, in the telegram sent from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it was stated that most of the prisons within the Sanjak of Cebel-i Lebanon had typhus and scabies disease and that allocation was required to prevent the spread of these diseases.²⁸ Again, in the Ba'abda Detention Center in Lebanon, it was stated that some of the prisoners were infected with scabies disease and an allocation of 2,500 kurush was requested for the treatment of the disease.²⁹ In a telegram sent from the Karesi lieutenant governorship to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, an allowance was requested to prevent the spread of scabies and smallpox seen in Balıkesir Prison.³⁰

As stated above, infectious diseases were spreading rapidly in Ottoman prisons during the First World War. So much so that in the last year of the war, the German Dr. Pollic, who served as the Inspector General of Prisons and Detention Houses within the Ottoman Empire, prepared a report revealing the situation of the prisons and detention houses in Aydın Province in May 1918. In the report of Mr. Pollic, it is seen that the causes and solutions of infectious diseases, including scabies, are included. In the aforementioned report of Mr. Pollic it was stated that despite the efforts of the administration, the wards were dirty, it would be appropriate to have the wards cleaned by the prisoners, that it was necessary to employ the prisoners and detainees every week, and to clean the objects accumulated in the wards as much as possible. In accordance with the report of Mr. Pollic the Ottoman Empire prepared a quarantine instruction to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Accordingly, it was decided that everyone who enters the prison should be taken to the quarantine room (those who are deemed to be clean can

²⁵ BOA, DH.MB.HPS, 97/14, 10 Ramazan 1336 (19 June 1918).

²⁶ BOA, DH.MB.HPS, 161/37, 22 Zilkade 1336 (29 August 1918).

²⁷ BOA, DH.MB.HPS, 143/34, 20 Şaban 1329 (16 August 1911).

²⁸ BOA, DH.MB.HPS, 76/55, 18 Cemazeyilahir 1335 (11 April 1917).

²⁹ BOA, DH.MB.HPS, 64/ 16, 3 Zilhicce 1335 (29 September 1917).

³⁰ BOA, DH.MB.HPS.M, 36/34, 1 Rabiulahir 1337 (4 January 1919).

be exempted), the quarantine period should not exceed 48 hours, the quarantine room should be washed with plenty of water every day, there should be whitewash every month, the persons sent to the quarantine should be cared for, their bath, clothes and dress should be cleaned, if the inmates do not have their clothes or dress, they should be forced to stay naked until their clothes are dry in their cells, the inmates who have a skin disease or scabies should be taken to a separate room from the others, if it is not possible, they should be taken to a regular examination from there, they should be given a bath once a week in order to continue the cleaning within the prison, the objects should be shaken in the garden or courtyard, the wards should be washed with plenty of water, the manager should check the works of this room and the items in each room should be determined by the manager, covering the furniture in the garden or in the courtyard, sweeping and washing the garden, arranging the conditions in the rooms with a ruler by the prison director.³¹

It is understood from the archive documents examined that scabies cases became widespread in Ottoman prisons, especially during the First World War. Undoubtedly, the deterioration of public order during the war increased the number of crimes and criminals. This situation caused a crowd in prisons and detention centers and caused scabies disease to be easily transmitted. On the other hand, with the deterioration of the economy day by day during the war years, prisoners and detainees were left in misery, and the negative situation in question caused the people in question to be deprived of cleanliness. So much so that it is seen that the prices of soap, which is one of the personal cleaning agents, have increased considerably in the war years. For example, when the prices of soap during the war were examined, the weight of soap was 7 kurush in July 1914, while it increased up to 140 kurush in the last year of the war.³²

Scabies cases in Ottoman schools

It is an inevitable fact that scabies, which is one of the infectious diseases, is also seen in schools, which is one of the closed and crowded places. In his work named “Hıfz-ı Sıhhat”, which is the subject of infectious diseases of Besim Ömer Pasha, one of the important physicians of the Ottoman Period, it is stated that “*Child infected with scabies should be immediately removed from the school and they should not be accepted to the school unless he completely heals*”.³³ This statement of the physician Ömer Pasha also shows how contagious scabies is.

In Presidency Ottoman Archive, which is the source of the study, it is shown that scabies disease was seen in some Ottoman schools. However, it is possible to say that these records are very limited. For example, in a letter sent from the Ministry of Education to the “Fatih Central Secondary School Directorate (Maarif Nezareti'nden Fatih Merkez Rüşdiyesi Müdürlüğü)” on May 25, 1908, it was stated that students who were infected with typhoid, dysentery and scabies disease should not be admitted to school without a

³¹ Tekin 2008, pp. 213-216.

³² Tüzün 2020, p. 473.

³³ Besim Ömer, *Hıfz-ı Sıhhat*, p. 285.

doctor's report that they did not have these diseases after their treatment was completed.³⁴ In a letter sent to the Secondary School Administration on April 2, 1909, it was stated that the students studying in Galata, Tophane-i Feyziye, Sultan Ahmed, and Besiktas Inas Secondary school were examined by the Medical Inspectorate, and only one of the 85 students studying in Tophane-i Feyziye Secondary school had scabies disease.³⁵ Although it is stated that only one student has scabies disease in the aforementioned school, it is likely that the disease will be seen in other students in the following days because the disease is contagious. On the other hand, it is seen that a regulation which consists of 25 articles was published by Ottoman Empire on February 23, 1913 (With the title of "Bilumum Mekatibde Emraz-ı Sâriye'nin Men-i Tevessüü ve İntişarı Hakkında Nizamname"). It is understood that Article 15 of the Regulation includes measures to be taken against infectious diseases, including scabies disease, in schools.

Moreover, in the article in question, it is stated that students with scabies, baldness, inflammation, trachoma and leprosy will be sent home immediately, and that students can go back to school with a doctor's report after they have fully recovered.³⁶ On the other hand, it is seen that the Ottoman Empire published another regulation with the title "Emraz-ı Sâriye ve İstilaiye Nizamnamesi Layiha" on 29 March 1914 in order to prevent infectious diseases. In Article 33 of the aforementioned regulation consisting of 65 articles, students who were infected with diseases such as measles, whooping cough, scabies, chickenpox and tuberculosis, except for the diseases that had to be notified, were prohibited from attending school. Again, students living in homes where any of these diseases occur are prohibited from coming to school because of the possibility of transmitting the disease.³⁷

Despite all the measures taken by the Ottoman Empire, it is seen that infectious diseases have spread. In fact, in a letter sent to the Ministry of Education by the Director of the Kadıköy Schoolmaster School (Kadıköy Darülmualimin-i Aliye Mektebi Müdürü) on 2 December 1917, it was stated that scabies disease has been seen very rarely in Kadıköy Schoolmaster School until now, but the disease has spread to most of the school students in recent days. In the continuation of the letter, the school principal stated that the students had only one clothes, so their laundry could not be washed, and that it was essential to send at least one underwear and shirt to the students. In the aforementioned article, the principal also pointed out that the school is very stuffy and it would be appropriate to use the bath in the school, otherwise the disease will spread in a short time.³⁸ It is possible to say that the Ministry of Education has responded positively to the request of Kadıköy Schoolmaster School Director for Turkish baths. So much so that

³⁴ BOA, (MF. İBT), 208/39,23 Cemazeyilevvel 1326 (23 June 1908). This instruction also supports the thought of Dr. Besim Ömer Pasha.

³⁵ BOA, MF.İBT,232/60, 18 Rabiulahir 1327 (9 May1909). However, Doctor Mr Şerif, who has been working in Erzurum Province for a long time, states that 3,000 people in the province in 1909 were mange patients. See: Aktaş 2015, p. 323.

³⁶ Düstur, Tertib-i Sani, C:5, Matbaa-ı Âmire, Dersaadet 1332. p. 105.

³⁷ BOA, (MV),234/76, 2 Cemazeyilevvel 1332 (29 March1914).

³⁸ BOA, (MF.MKT),1231/122, 20 Safer 1336 (5 December1917).

shortly after the telegram in question, it is seen that a letter about this issue was sent to the Üsküdar-Kadıköy Water Company Directorate by the Ministry of Education. In the article, it was stated that the scabies disease seen in the Schoolmaster School has gained momentum recently, and that there is no water in the sixty-room school, and that the water given to Kadıköy to eliminate the disease in the school was requested to be given to the school.³⁹

Although there are few examples of scabies disease in schools in the Ottoman Empire, it seems likely that this disease was more common in Ottoman schools, but this was not recorded sufficiently. This is because it is not difficult to predict how widespread scabies, which is highly contagious, will be in schools with insufficient water sources, and students most of which have single clothing.

Other scabies cases

In the Presidential Ottoman Archive, which is the source of the study, apart from the above-mentioned records, it is seen that there are three other records related to scabies. In a letter sent by Celil Bey to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 3 November 1900, it was stated that Istanbul Local Administration could not allocate money to “Hospital (Bimarhane⁴⁰)” due to financial difficulties, and therefore scabies disease was widespread and it was asked to do so.⁴¹ In the record dated 30 January 1907, it was stated that Kokas, one of the Armenian Nation patients with scabies, was treated at İstanbul Bimarhane and was returned with an officer.⁴² These records in Presidency Ottoman Archive suggest that scabies patients are treated in Bimarhane. In another record dated 2 May 1914, it is known that a person who was infected with scabies disease asked for help from the sultan of the Mehmed Reshad. In the record in question, Indian Mohammad Sadik Al-Dawahan stated that his arms had been affected by scabies and they were itching for nine years because of scabies and that he had no financial opportunity to get rid of it. Al-Dawahan, for this reason, asked for help from the King of England and the Emir of Afghanistan, but could not get an answer, so he asked help from Ottoman Sultan V Mehmed Reshad.⁴³

In addition, while there were records showing that scabies was quite common in prisons in the Presidency Ottoman Archive during the First World War, there was no record showing the status of scabies among the civilian people behind the front. However, Zafer Toprak states that although infectious diseases, including scabies, were very limited before the First World War, they increased with the beginning of the war in Istanbul before 1914.⁴⁴ On the other hand, studies show that scabies disease spread after the war. Because this situation can be clearly seen from the reports prepared by the health teams of Red Crescent, who was assigned in various parts of Anatolia immediately after the First World War. According to the reports of the Trabzon delegation dated 29 June 1919,

³⁹ BOA, *MF.MKT*, 1231/121, 20 Safer 1336 (5 December 1917).

⁴⁰ See the detailed information concerning the hospitals called “bimarhane”: See Çapan, 2019.

⁴¹ BOA, *DH.MKT*, 2424/56, 10 Recep 1318 (3 November 1900).

⁴² BOA, (*ZB*), 473/21, 17 Kanunisani 1322 (30 January 1907)

⁴³ BOA, (*HR.TO*), 545/ 109, 2 May 1914.

⁴⁴ Toprak, 1987, p. 36.

syphilis, gonorrhoea and scabies were seen in Trabzon Province and in Giresun. In addition, in the report, 270 malaria, 9 syphilis and especially scabies cases were encountered in the outpatient clinic opened in the region in the first days. Again, the Red Crescent, Committee in Erzincan mentions that skin diseases, including scabies, are widespread in the region in question.⁴⁵

In addition, in the record dated 8 August 1921 sent by the Kadıköy Center of Ottoman Red Crescent Society to the Red Crescent Society, it was stated that scabies and dysentery diseases were seen among the Muslim Refugee children in Selimiye and assistance was requested for their treatment.⁴⁶ Again, in another record dated 18 August 1921, it was seen that the Head of the National Medical Department reported to the Red Crescent Society that there was a need for sulfur due to the increase in the number of scabies patients in hospitals.⁴⁷ Although all these examples give us very limited information about scabies disease in the Ottoman Empire, they make the possibility that scabies, which is not an infectious but fatal disease, is not sufficiently recorded.

Scabies Cases in Animals

Scabies disease is an infectious disease that can be seen in animals as well as in humans. Scabies is a disease that itches and disturbs animals and causes them to weaken day by day. Scabies, which was mostly seen in animals such as sheep and goats, causes the weaning and their hair to be shed.⁴⁸

In Presidency Ottoman Archive, 4 records of scabies disease were determined in animals. For example, in a letter dated March 4, 1889, sent to the "Ministry of Finance Emlak-ı Emiriyye Directorate (Maliye Nezareti Emlak-ı Emiriyye Müdüriyeti)" by the agricultural manager of a farm; it has been reported that the sheep in the farm⁴⁹ were suffering from scabies and five hundred tons of powdered medicine is needed to eliminate the disease. In addition, it was requested that the cost of this medicine be covered by the "Emlak-ı Emiriyye Directorate".⁵⁰

In the letter sent from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to Edirne Province on 25 November 1900, it was stated that 550 sheep sent from İstefan Sofia by Cısr-ı Mustafa Pasha were examined, as a result of the examination, scabies was seen in 5 sheep and they were destroyed. In the record, it was also stated that there was no harm in slaughtering the remaining 545 sheep as butchery. In the record dated 13 January 1911, it was asked whether there⁵¹ were smallpox and scabies diseases in animals by sending a letter to Sofia, Varna, Cuma-i Atik, Şumnu, Pazarcık, Osmanpaazarı, Prevadi, Balçık, Hezargrad, Dobruca, Burgaz, Filibe, Yanbolu and Şıpka.⁵² The fact that the Ottoman Empire wanted

⁴⁵ Çapa 2010, p. 138-139.

⁴⁶ Kızılay Arşivi, *Hilâl-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*, 21/113, 8 August 1921.

⁴⁷ Kızılay Arşivi, *Hilâl-i Ahmer Cemiyeti*, 21/110, 18 Jun 1921.

⁴⁸ Bulan 2019, p. 37.

⁴⁹ The name of the farm was "Mihaliç Çiftlikat-ı Hümayunu".

⁵⁰ BOA, (ML.EEM), 110/97, 5 Nisan 1305 (17 April 1889).

⁵¹ BOA, DH.MKT, 2436/96 16 Şaban 1318 (9 December 1900).

⁵² BOA, (HR.SFR.04), 682/1, (13 January 1911).

to know the status of butchery animals also shows the importance that the Ottoman Empire attached to the health of its citizens. On April 3, 1915, it is seen that a copy of the instructions published about scabies disease was sent from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Karahisar-ı Sahib Lieutenant governorship.⁵³

Conclusion

Scabies, which is an infectious and itching skin disease, has affected societies since ancient times. However, there is no information about when scabies emerged in the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, as a result of the examinations, no study on scabies disease could be reached in the Empire. Therefore, in this study, scabies disease experienced in the Ottoman Empire was discussed based on the documents in Presidency Ottoman Archive in order to fill this gap to some extent. According to the information obtained from the Presidential Ottoman Archive, it was determined that the first record of the scabies case in the Ottoman Empire belonged to 1889. The archive records show that scabies disease was widespread in Ottoman prisons. Without a doubt, this is due to the fact that prisons are crowded, and they do not pay enough attention to or cannot pay attention to personal hygiene. Because the records examined show that some prisons do not even have a bathhouse, most of the prisoners have a single dress and live in poverty. When the scabies cases in Ottoman prisons are examined, it is seen that the people with scabies mostly consist of male prisoners and female prisoners have less scabies disease. Without a doubt, this is due to the fact that the number of female prisoners is less than that of male prisoners and that female prisoners probably comply with the rules of cleanliness more.

Although Ottoman administrators tried to prevent the spread of scabies disease by eliminating the aforementioned negativities with the regulations they issued, it is understood from the records examined that they were not very successful. On the other hand, the records in the Presidential Ottoman Archive, which are very few, indicate that scabies disease was also experienced in Ottoman schools. So much so that it is understood that some of the students studying in schools do not have sufficient facilities, like the prisoners in prisons. In addition to all these, from the archive records that led to the study, it is thought that scabies disease gained momentum during the First World War and was widespread in Anatolia after the war. As a result, although there is a very limited number of documents about scabies disease in the Presidential Ottoman Archive, this situation makes it possible that scabies is not sufficiently recorded since it is not a fatal disease, and that scabies is essentially more common in Ottoman society.

For the treatment of scabies; while Evliya Çelebi suggested the use of sulphurous hot springs, Ali Ufki stated that it is very beneficial to apply the cream prepared from a mixture of walnut kernels, "Hacılar sulfur", "Külhan ash" and laurel oil to the patient's cleansed body. The famous physician Besim Ömer; had stated that the use of sulfur ointment, petroleum and kerosene oil was important in eliminating scabies. In addition,

⁵³ BOA, (DH.İ.UM),52/2, 21 Cemazeyilahir 1333 (6 May 1915).

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Ottoman administrators tried to prevent the spread of scabies by enacting regulations, quarantine practices, supplying clothes to those in need, and increasing the number of baths at the same time. However, it is understood from the records examined that they were not very successful.

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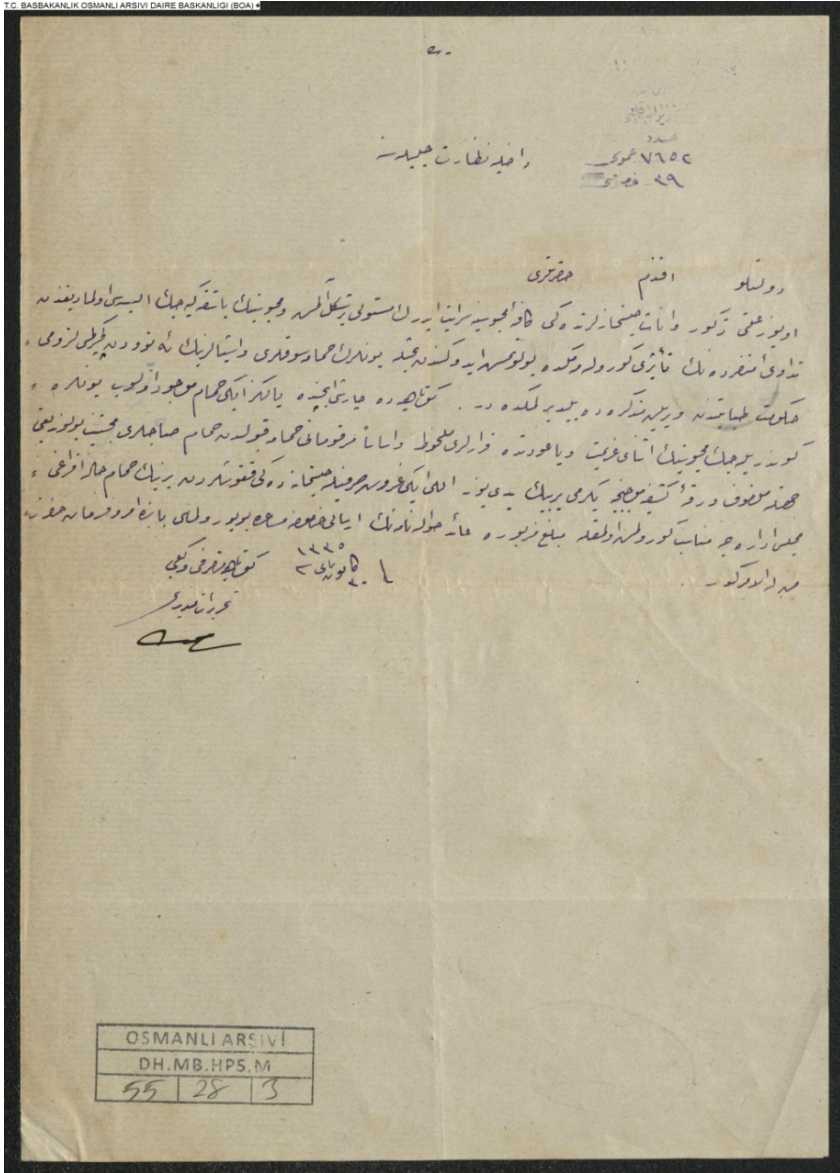
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Appendices



DH.MB.HPS.M.00055.00028.003

Annex 1: Record of taking measures due to the spread of scabies disease in Kütahya Male and Woman Prison and to provide a funding for the construction of a bath.

مذكرة وقرانامه نومردی

معارف عمریه نظاری قلمچی دارومه مخصوص مسوده

شعبه

شخصی دوسیه نومردی

دوسیه اولیائی

عمومی دوسیه نومردی

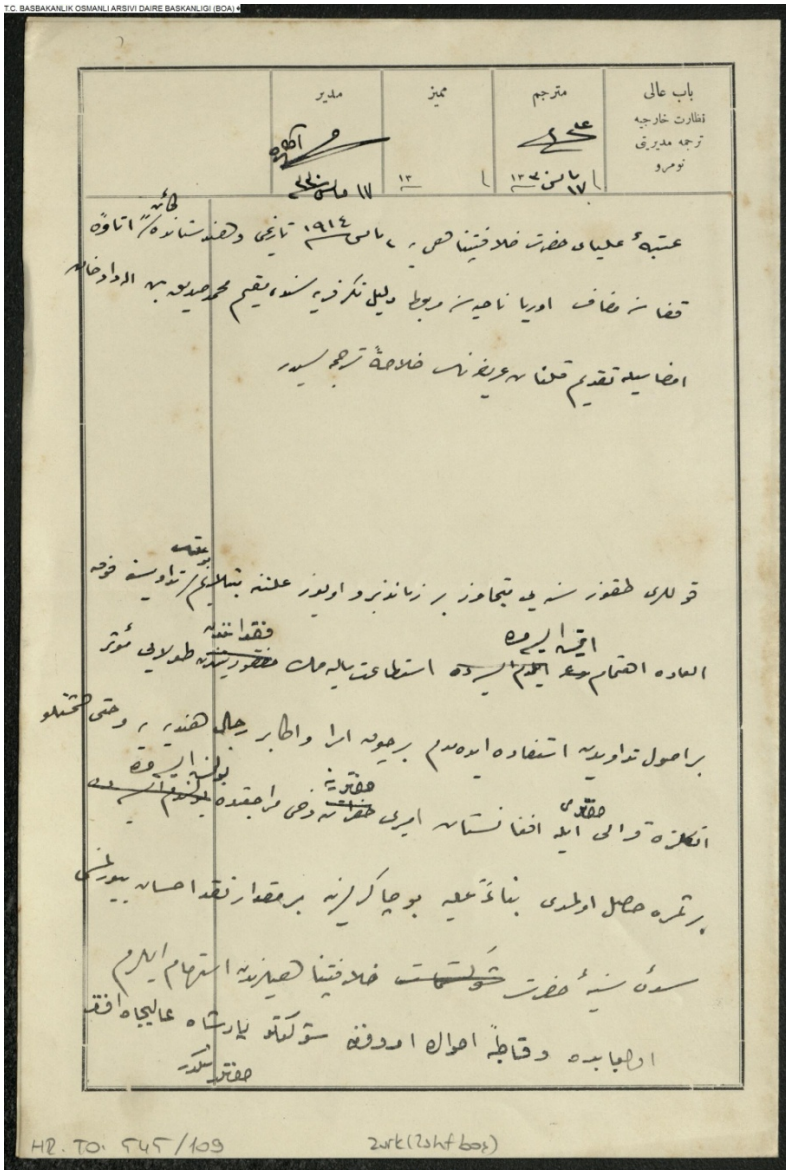
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<p>اسکدار - قلمچی صحرانیه مدرسته</p> <p>دائمه عیال طبعیه نه لردو رایج او بوزخسته کندی بکافورده استبداد بیکن الحیه</p> <p>کلب ررورک موجود قلمچی صحرانیه مدرسه معالی قلمچی در صحرانیه استبداد بیکن قلمچی</p> <p>صحرانیه مدرسه ایضیه صحرانیه قلمچی در صحرانیه مدرسه استبداد بیکن قلمچی</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ایضیه قلمچی</p>														
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Annex 2: A record of the emergence of scabies disease in Kadıköy Schoolmaster School, and therefore, the request for water to be given to the bath of the school in question.



Annex 3: Record of Indian Mohammad Sadik Al-Dawahan, who has been infected by scabies for nine years, requesting help from the sultan.