

THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL LIFE IN THE CITY OF SHKODRA DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF THE 14th CENTURY

Ermal Baze

Faculty of history and philology university of Tirana, Tirane, Albania
Email:ermalbaze11@hotmail.com

Abstract

The primary and most comprehensive document is “Statutes of Shkodra” for analyzing social features in the Arbëror city life of Shkodra at the beginnings of 14th century. The city of Shkodra in the first half of 14th century was generally a fortified centre, surrounded by defensive walls that were equipped with entrances and towers. Shkodra of the 14th century experienced a large influx of new residents moving in from surrounding villages. Residents of the city, which had the status of citizen (civis), were divided into noble (nobiles) and people (populares). Besides citizens with full rights, with no limitations, participating in the economic, social and city policy, the Statutes of Shkodra elite even the presence of foreign residents, mainly Slavic and Latin. Because of the high number of thefts and to prevent them, law of Shkodra citizens contained and provided for a number of legal provisions. Besides thefts and robberies, in a society dominated by violence, aggression, insecurity and social tensions, certainly did not lack neither insults, beating, injuries, deaths and swordfight duels that were typical for the medieval era. All these were sanctioned by fines of monetary value. Statutes of Shkodra provide relatively significant information about the role and significance of image of women in the society. In a number of provisions detailed specifically to offenses against the morality, which showed bases of legal criminal protection of personality, dignity and honour of women. Also, harlots and prostitutes were excluded from the right to inherit wealth of their family. Statutes provide interesting data of the marital life. A young married couple, who would seek to live separately from groom`s parents, were forced to provide and share together possessions in life. Another problem in Shkodra was the family`s heritage rights of wealth which would be granted to children by their parents. Children lost the right of inheritance in family property, only in case of disagreement to live together with parents, and when exercised violence against or not taking care of parents in times of need. Presentation of such documentary facts evidences medieval features of Shkodra`s civil society in the first decades of the 14th century.