

NAHIJA PLAV IN SKADAR DEFTER FROM 1485

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Abstract

The Skadar sanjak was established as an independent administrative unit after the fall of Skadar Fortress (Rozarf) in 1479. According to the sanjak's defter from 1485, it was divided into four districts: Skadar, Podgorica, Pec and Bihor. In this work we will present the settlement Plav, which at the time belonged to the district of Bihor in the administrative-territorial sense. Today, the municipality of Plav belongs to Montenegro. It is located in the north-east part of the country, at the foot of the mountain range Prokletije and at the source of the river Lim. On the basis of defter from 1485, we found out that Plav consisted of 15 villages, located in Plav-Gusinje Valley and downstream of the river Lim, from Novsici to Suceska. This census, created shortly after the Ottoman conquest, complemented the lack of sources for the settlements and population of the area in the Middle Ages. Ottoman defter presented the current state in the area immediately after the Christian authorities were replaced by the Ottoman authorities. Only this defter listed all the villages in Plav which existed at the time. Many villages have retained their names to this day, while we will try to compare and locate other unknown villages with the current state and thus improve the present knowledge. In consideration of this area, historical, geographical and military maps were used. The character of this work imposed research activities and a large part of the work was based on field research. Field research should help us complete the findings from the previously mentioned document, for locating some of the villages of Plav. Statistical methods were also applied because there were databases that should be noted. Given that the census had fiscal target, it is logical to assume the existence of great interest of Ottoman authorities that the census covered all tax holders. It is certain that the quality of the data on the registration of taxpayers had to be high. Because of this detailed Ottoman document, we have the complete demographic and economic picture, with the names of the residents and their duties recorded as well. Using these data there is a possibility to approximately determine the population of the area. Census data on the number of house seniors, men, widows and unmarried provides the basis for that. For the demographics of the area it is important to emphasize that the defter mentioned a number of newcomers and widows, which indicated the abandonment and revival of settlements in the area. On the basis of duties (taxes) from the Skadar defter from 1485, we found out which crops were grown in every village of Plav. Cereals which were grown included: wheat, oats, barley, rye, millet and herbs used for food consumption. From industrial plants only flax was grown. Beekeeping was also one of the most important occupations of medieval residents of Plav.

Keywords: *Plav, Skadar defter from 1485, villages, Middle Ages.*