

TETOVO ACCORDING TO THE CENSUSES OF 1452-1453 AND 1467-1468

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Abstract

The object of study of this paper is the city of Tetovo based on two cadastral registrations, that of 1452-53 and 1467-68 regarding the Tetovo region. Initially, the circumstances of the inclusion of this region in the Skopje district and later in the Skopje Pashalik will be clarified. Through this paper, the Ottoman censuses only for the city of Tetovo during the 15th century will be discussed, as an administrative and military center of the entire region. In this context, the socio-ethnic, demographic, religious, and economic aspects that characterized the city of Tetovo during this period will be addressed. Special emphasis will be placed on shedding light on the ethnic structure of this city, particularly by relying on relevant literature on anthroponyms and patronyms to demonstrate the presence of the Arbër population in this city.

Keywords: Tetovo, Ottoman censuses, population, Islamization process, taxes

Introduction

Ottoman censuses of the 15th century constitute primary sources of significant importance for the study of the socio-economic, demographic, and ethnic structures of the cities that were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, the censuses of 1452-1453 and 1467-1468 provide an overview of the population, its religious affiliation, and the economic development of the city of Tetovo itself as an administrative and military center of the district of the same name.

This paper aims to explicate the fundamental aspects of life in Tetovo during the 15th century. It addresses the establishment of Ottoman power in the Polog valley and its initial integration into the administrative-military structure of the Skopje district, followed by its incorporation into the Pashasanjak of Skopje. Through a critical lens, the socio-economic transformations that Tetovo experienced under Ottoman rule are examined, including the early stages of the Islamization process, the implementation of the timar system, and the outcomes of this economic-military framework within the Ottoman Empire.

By comparing two cadastral records from the 15th century, we gain a more profound understanding, insofar as possible, of the ethnic structure of Tetovo, with a particular focus on illuminating the presence and role of Arbërs during this period. In this regard, a meticulous and critical approach has been applied to the analysis of these records, with particular attention to the translation of anthroponyms and patronymics of trees from Ottoman into Macedonian, ascertaining, through the scientific results of Albanian Osmanologists, that the transcription of some of these names carried by the local population has been alienated and adapted to the Slavic form. This critical approach aims to enrich the body of historical research concerning Tetovo during Ottoman rule.

Body of manuscript

Following the conquest of Skopje (September 1391-January 1392)³, the Ottomans transformed the city into a military base from which they launched expeditions against neighboring regions. This way *the district was formed*, namely *the province* (ujh) of Skopje (sanjak). The district was governed by an appointed official, the *district governor* (ujh-bey), who was responsible for organizing and strengthening Ottoman power in the newly conquered provinces, supervising the neighboring vassals, and, when conditions permitted, expanding the Ottoman Empire's borders.⁴ The Vilayet of Tetovo, including the Polog valley and its surroundings, also fell within the province of Skopje, which had its headquarters in the city of Tetovo.⁵

During this period, one of the primary objectives of the Skopje *province* governor was to extend Ottoman possessions northward, towards Bosnia. Following the occupation of the latter by the Ottoman army in 1463, *the province* of Skopje also ceased to exist. Consequently, the Nahija of Tetovo, along with 21 other nahijas, was placed under the administration of the Pashasanjak of Skopje, which was the most significant sanjak established in Albanian territories during the 15th century, stretching from Thessaloniki in the east to Gostivar and Kicevo in the west.⁶

In line with the establishment of Ottoman power in the occupied provinces, the process of cadastral registration was initiated, undertaken by the Ottoman authorities from time to time. As a result of this private feudal property was eliminated and a new military feudal regime was established over *mirie* (state land) ownership. This transformation was concretely expressed through the land and population registrations (*tahrir defterleri*)⁷. By declaring the registered lands as state property, the peasants were deprived of their right to private land, while the local feudal lords were stripped of both their properties and the privileges they had previously enjoyed under the feudal laws of that time.

Such registrations were conducted by the order of the High Porte, in collaboration with local government authorities, namely the nahija. This process was carried out by a special commission consisting of an *emin* (drafter) and a *katip* (scribe). The primary objective of these registrations was to produce a detailed record (*defter-i mufassal*) of the population, taxes, and other feudal revenues. Based on this detailed registration, the special commission would then compile another cadastral register, a summary version (*defter-i icmal*)⁸, by selecting pertinent data.

These records also include two registers from 1452-1453 and 1467-1468, which cover the Tetovo district, which we will discuss in this paper. The 1452-1453 register is the oldest for the Polog Valley, and it reveals that both Upper and Lower Polog, along with the surrounding villages, were part of the Tetovo Vilayet, encompassing the Sharr and Mali i Thatë highlands. The 1452-1453 registration for the Tetovo Vilayet falls under the *defter-i mufassal* type. Although it is undated, through comparison with the summary register published by the researcher Hazim Šabanović, which was drafted between May 9-18, 1455, and noting that the register in question for the vilayet of Tetovo mentions Sultan Murad II as deceased, it can be inferred that this register must have been compiled in a time interval from the year 1452-1455. Thus, it was prepared during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481). However, according

³ Драги Ѓорѓиев, *Скопје од турското освојување до крајот на XVII век*, Скопје, 1997, p. 18, 19.

⁴ Qerim Dalipi, *Arbëria midis Republikës së Venedikut dhe Perandorisë Osmane*, Tetovo, 2012, p. 161, 162; Aleks Buda, *Studime për Skënderbeun*, prepared and edited: Tatjana Buda Naxhimihali, Tirana, 2018, p. 118.

⁵ *Турски документи за историјата на македонскиот народ – Опирни пописни дефтери од XV век*, III, уредио: nga Методија Соколки, Скопје, 1976, f. 7-8 (hereinafter: *Опирни пописни дефтери од XV век*).

⁶ *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, I, Tirana, 2002, f. 320, 379.

⁷ Selami Pulaha, *Pronësia feudale në pronat shqiptare (shek. XV-XVII)*, Tirana, 1988, p. 31.

⁸ Halil Inalçik, *Devlet-i 'Aliyye, studime mbi Perandorinë Osmane – I*, translated by: Eduart Caka, Tirana, 2021, p. 261-272; *Турски документи за историјата на македонскиот народ – Опирни пописни дефтери No 4 (1467-1468)*, edited: Методија Соколки – Александер Стојановски, Скопје, 1971, p. 8 (hereinafter: *Опирен пописен дефтер No 4*).

to H. Šabanović, the Anatolia and Rumelia census was carried out only after the conquest of Constantinople (May 29, 1453).⁹

Similarly, the 1467-1468 census is undated, with no specific information regarding whose orders it was executed under, who drafted it, or when it was drafted. Nevertheless, through a comparative method, using marginal data from this register and the summary register of 1455, researchers M. Sokoloski and A. Stojanovski concluded that Register *No 4* was compiled between late June and early November 1468.¹⁰

Based on the names of the villages part of the Vilayet and later the Nahija of Tetovo, its borders can be roughly defined as where it extended. Thus, to the east and northeast, it bordered the Vilayet of Skopje, to the south (of Gostivar) it bordered the district of Kicevo, to the southwest it bordered the district of Reka, and to the west and northwest, and to the west and northwest by Mount Sharr.¹¹

The administrative and military center of the Nahija of Tetovo was the city of Tetovo. At its head was the *subashi*, who depended on the sanjakbey, while exercising both military and administrative power. The Subashi was supported by a Qadi, appointed by the Sultan, who held judicial authority. Meanwhile, the Çeribashi, under the command of the Subashi, was responsible for leading the Timariots during military expeditions. The Nahija was protected by the castle of Sobri, where the Ottoman garrison was stationed.¹²

Regarding the name of the city of Tetovo, we find it in two variants in the Ottoman registers from 1452-1453 and 1467-1468. In the earlier register, the settlement of Tetovo retained its pre-Ottoman name and was registered as HTetova (IhTetova).¹³ At this time, this settlement was registered as a village that was also a marketplace. In 1452-1453, Tetovo was an integral part of the hass of the Arbërian subashi of the Tetovo Vilayet, Hasan Bey Zenebishi. The settlement was divided into two parts: Muslim and Christian. The Muslim section counted 60 households, while the Christian section counted 146 households, six widows, and 36 bachelors. Five (5) residents who came from Debar vilayet and lived in this city were also registered.¹⁴

It is notable that, during the 1452-1453 census, the Ottomans continued to use the name Kalkandele for the Vilayet of Tetovo, but not for its center, which was called HTetova. This will change only during the 1467-1468 census when the settlement of Tetovo took the name of the province, namely nahija. This designation continued in all subsequent records during Ottoman rule. Regarding the etymology of the name Kalkandele, the researcher H. Šabanović suggests it is derived from the Turkish words *kalkan*: *shield* and *delen*: *the one who penetrates*.

¹⁵ In literal translation, it means *the one who penetrates the shield*, while a *pierced shield* would be more appropriate.

In the 60s of the 15th ct., Tetovo experienced significant economic development, which also reflected in the increase in population. As a result, in 1463, new neighborhoods were established in the city of Tetovo, where the Teqe, Sheikh, and Masjid neighborhoods are mentioned.¹⁶ Thus, in the census of 1467-1468, Tetovo was transformed from a village into a city and, consequently, into the administrative-military center of the field of Pollog with its surroundings. According to this census, Tetovo was part of the hass of the Subashi of the nahija, Sulejman Bey, the son of Jasha Bey. As in the previous census, the city was divided into two parts: the

⁹Hazim Šabanović, *Krajište Isa-bega Isakovića – zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455 godine*, Sarajevo, 1964, XXVII. General censuses throughout the empire were carried out after major conquests and events such as the capture of Thessaloniki (1430), Istanbul (1453) and Budin (1526). There were cases of exception, where based on the increase or decrease of the population in a certain area, registrations were undertaken in the sanjaks (Halil Inalcik, *Devlet-i "Aliyye"* p. 268).

¹⁰Опишан пописан дефтер No 4, p. 10-11.

¹¹Qerim Dalipi & Besim Morina, *Rrethanat socio-ekonomike në nahijen e Tetovës sipas regjistrimit të viteve 1467-1468*, në: "Gjergj Kastriot-Skënderbeu, në 550 vjetorin e vdekjes", Pristina, October 16, 2018, Pristina, 2019, p. 105.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³*Hietova* : derives from the number *eight* (*tetë*) , from which Albanian anthroponyms and patronymics such as: *Teta*, *Tetaj* (Qemal Murati, *Dëshmime onomastike për autoktoninë e shqiptarëve në trojet etnike të tyre në Maqedoni*, Tirana, 1993, p. 10-11).

¹⁴Опишни пописни дефтери од XV век, p. 103-105.

¹⁵*Krajište Isa-bega Isakovića – zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455 godine*, p. 85.

¹⁶Александер Стојановски, *Македонија во турскоото средновековие (XIV-XVII век)*, Skopje, 1989, p. 197-198.

Muslim section, which counted 41 families, and the Christian section, which counted 180 families, 43 widows, and 16 bachelors.

The table below presents a comparison of the number of inhabitants for the city of Tetovo from the two censuses:

	Christians			Muslims		
	no. of families	no. of widows	no. bachelors	no. of families	no. bachelors	converted
Register of 1452-1453 census	146	6	36	60	/	3 ¹⁷
Register of 1467-1468 census	180	43	16	41	/	3 ¹⁸

From the table above, it is of interest to note that from the first to the second census, we have a significant increase in the population of the city of Tetovo. As a result, relying on these data, we can determine approximately the number of inhabitants of this settlement. Thus, based on the fact that a family in Ottoman society had 4 to 8 members, while the average family is 5-6 members¹⁹ and calculating the total number of Muslim and Christian families in the 1452- 1453, together with widows as heads of households, then we have 212 families. From this, we can say that Tetovo during this census had about 1100-1300 inhabitants. Meanwhile, using the same method as above, in the 1467-1468 census, the city of Tetovo had 264 families, respectively numbering around 1300-1600 inhabitants, in other words we have a population increase of 25%. In addition to demographic data, these two registers are a rich treasure trove of anthroponyms and patronymics, through which an attempt will be made to illuminate, as much as possible, the ethnic structure of the city of Tetovo. However, determining the ethnic affiliation of the population during this period presents challenges. Considering the journey of the Albanians throughout history since ancient times, with their conquest by Rome the first layer of foreign proper names was created. The same continued from the 4th century with Byzantine rule, which in certain centuries of the Middle Ages was intertwined with Slavic rule, the second layer of foreign names was formed that penetrated their area through the administrative-ecclesiastical power, which caused this local population in most cases to use names of these cultural spheres. Especially starting from the 15th century. In the 13th century, the Orthodox Arbës were baptized with typical Slavic and Greek-Byzantine names. Thus, it is almost impossible to deduce their ethnic affiliation based on their personal names due to the assimilationist policy of the Slavic church, baptizing its followers with typical Slavic names regardless of their ethnic affiliation.²⁰ Within this issue, is also the decoding and transcription of Ottoman registers by Slavic researchers. Here, we refer to two registers (1452-1453 and 1467-1468) that have been translated into Macedonian. The paleographers involved have transcribed names that were originally borne by Arbës, but belonged to the ecclesiastical or even Slavic sphere, and recorded in these documents with Albanian suffixes like **i** and **a**, such as *Aleksî, Petri* and *Petër, Mati, Andreja, Tusha*, etc., into Slavic vernacular forms like *Aleksije, Petar, Matija, Andrija, Tosha*, etc. Additionally, typical Slavic names with Albanian forms, such as *Bojki, Gjurki*,

¹⁷Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век, p. 103-105.

¹⁸Опшрен пописен дефтер N o 4 , p. 293-296.

¹⁹Ilber Ortaylı, *The Family in the Ottoman Society*, Skopje-Pristina-Tirana, 2014, p. 12-13.

²⁰Gjovallin Shkurtaj, *Onomastikë dhe Etnolingustikë*, Tirana, 2015, p. 28, 29; Iljaz Rexha, *Vendbanimet dhe popullsia albane e Kosovës*, Pristina, 2016, p. 36-37.

Stajki, Vladi, etc., were transcribed and adapted into the Slavic language forms like *Bojko, Gjurko, Rajko, Stajko, Vladko*, etc. Furthermore, it should be added that many anthroponyms and patronymics of Arbër family heads were not accurately deciphered. Examples include names like *Tominko* being transcribed as *Pomenko*, *Jano* as *Janko*, *Lazor* as *Lazar*, *Pulo* as *Bojo*, *Rad* and *Radi* as *Rade*, *Bardh* as *Bard*, *Shurdhë* as *Sheurd*, *Burrimadh* as *Buliman*, *Bardha* as *Barda*, *Gegë* as *Gego* or *Gege*, *Lesh* as *Leshko*, *Kokë* as *Koke*, *Dukagjin* as *Dukagin*, *Gjon* as *Gon* or *Gonë*, and so forth. This led to an unrealistic overview of the ethnic structure of the town of Tetovo and the entire district, particularly for the Orthodox Arbëresh who bore names from the Slavic cultural sphere. In reality, according to S. Pulaha, the number of individuals from the Slavic element must have been much smaller than the number of persons bearing Slavic names.²¹

To shed light on these complex circumstances surrounding the ethnic affiliation of the population of Tetovo during this period, anthroponomic evidence a priori helps us. In this regard, the scholar Jireček, analyzing names from Stefan Dečan's *chrysobula* (1330) and the *Venetian cadastral register* of Shkodra (1416), observed that the most common personal names used by Arbërs were: Alexa (Lesh), Andreas, Bencho, Costantinus, Dminko (Dominicus), Dmitr (Demetrius), Girgi, Gin or Ghin, Gon or Jon (Jovan), Lazar, Leo, Marin, Marko, Mauricius, Michael, Peter, Paul, Pelegrin, Sergius, Stephan, Zacharias. Additionally, he also highlights that certain Slavic names were frequently used by Arbërs: *Dabizhiv, Radomir, Radogost, Bogdan, Vojin, Vlad, and Golem*.²²

Some of these anthroponomic examples can also be found in the city of Tetovo itself, held by the heads of Arbër families and their ancestors (both anthroponyms and patronymics). First of all, the most frequently mentioned names in the two registers (1452-1453 and 1467-1468) are *Dmitr* (in the form *Dimitri*), *Jovan*, *Stephan* (in the form *Stepan* or rarely as *Stefan*), *Peter* (in the form *Petre*), *Jon* (in the forms *Jon*, *Jonç-o/e*, or *Jonko*). Then follow the names *Gon* (*John*), *Lazar*, *Marko*, *Mihael* (in the forms *Mihail* and *Mihal*), *Andreas* (in the form *Andreja*), and *Costantinus* (in the forms *Kostantin* and *Kostadin*).

Based on these registers, the following table shows the number of individuals bearing each respective name in the city of Tetovo:

Name:	Number of individuals according to the 1452-1453 census	Number of individuals according to the census of 1467-1468
<i>Dimitri</i>	5	9
<i>Stepan</i>	5	9
<i>Jovan</i>	2	11
<i>Petri</i>	/	3
<i>Jon</i>	/	5
<i>Lazar, Lazor</i>	3	3
<i>Gon</i>	1	/
<i>Mihael</i>	1	1
<i>Marko</i>	/	1
<i>Andreas</i>	3	/
<i>Kostadin</i>	/	1 ²³

²¹Ijaz Rexha, *op.cit.*, p. 39-40, 68; Qemal Murati, *op.cit.*, p. 86; Ramiz Abdyli, *Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë sipas të dhënave të defterëve të shek. XV-XVI*, in: "Shqiptarët e Maqedonisë" Tetovo, 1994, p. 134.

²²Qerim Dalipi & Besim Morina, *op.cit.*, p. 118-119.

²³Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век, p. 104, 105; Опширен пописен дефтер N 4, p. 294, 295, 296.

In addition to the aforementioned names, the anthroponym Nikolla was also quite widespread, which is also dominant in terms of the amount of its extension in the settlements of the Tetovo nahija, and according to the researcher Muhamet Tërnavë, this name undoubtedly belongs to the Albanian culture.²⁴ Consequently, during the census of 1452-1453 in the city of Tetovo, 12 individuals bore this name, while in the register of 1467-1468, 11 people were recorded with the same name.²⁵

In addition to this name, we find the Arbërian name *Proj*, although it is transcribed in the Slavic form *Projo* and *Projçe*, *Projko* in the city of Tetovo, which during the 1452-1453 register was held by 2 people, while in the year 1467-1468 by 3 people.²⁶

Another name category includes those anthroponyms that the Arbërian population fanatically preserved, resisting the influence and imposition of names from foreign cultural spheres, particularly the Slavic one. In this regard, the most widespread were the names *Koja* in the form *Koj-o*, *Koj-ço* and *Koj-çin*, *Melo* in the forms *Melo* and *Melko* and *Nika* (in the forms *Nik-o* and *Nik-sha*),²⁷ which are also found in the city of Tetovo.

Another notable phenomenon among the Arbërians during the Middle Ages was the use of appellatives instead of surnames, which primarily served an ethnonymic function. In both of the aforementioned registers, such appellatives also appear in Tetovo in forms like *arbanas* and *arnaut/d*, and as: *Andreja*, the son of *Arbanas*, *Dola/Dula Arnaudi*, and *Gon Arnaudi*.²⁸

Through the two Ottoman registers which we have discussed above, we can also see the beginning of the process of Islamization of the population of the city of Tetovo. As was the case throughout the Albanian territory, in Pollog, and specifically in Tetovo, the spread of Islam was closely conditioned by political, social, and economic factors. Although the progress of Islamization in the 15th century was gradual, however, since the first years of the Ottoman rule, this process led to slow changes in the social and cultural structure of the population.

Initially, the dispersal of Islam on a larger scale occurred in urban areas, and later expanded to villages. This was because, under Ottoman rule, cities became administrative, economic, and cultural centers. In addition to the local population, Turkish colonizers from Asia Minor, Ottoman military-administrative troops, and Muslim clergy, along with religious institutions, settled in the cities.²⁹ For this reason, in the nahija of Tetovo, the process of Islamization was felt the most in the city of Tetovo, which is why in the first Ottoman register for Polog, we are presented with the existence of two separate parts of the city, the Muslim part from the Christian part. In the 1452-1453 register, Tetovo had 60 Muslim families and 159 Christian families (with 6 widows as heads of families). During this registration, we can notice that four family heads were newly Islamized, such as: *Yusuf*, son of *Gon*; *Hamza Ilko*; *Karaxha* son of *Petrani* and *Murat* son of *Damjani*.³⁰

Relying on aforementioned data, it can be inferred that during 1452-1453, out of a total population of 1,100-1,300 inhabitants in Tetovo, approximately 300-360 inhabitants (around 30%) were Muslim, while 800-940 (70%) were Christian. Meanwhile, in the subsequent census of 1467-1468, an interesting trend is observed, with a decrease in the number of Muslim families and an increase in Christian ones. During this period, Tetovo remained composed of two religious communities: the Muslim population, counting 41 families, and the Christian population, 223 families. At this time, the city's population was estimated at 1,300-1,600

²⁴ Comp: Muhamet Tërnavë, *Popullsia e Kosovës gjatë shekujve XIV-XV*, Prishtinë, 1995, f. 120.

²⁵ Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век, p. 104, 105; Опширен пописен дефтер N 4, p. 294, 295, 296.

²⁶ Comp.: Iljaz Rexha, *vc.*, p. 14, 109-110; (Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век.; Опширен пописен дефтер N 4, in more pages).

²⁷ Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век, in more places; Опширен пописен дефтер N 4, in more places; Comp.: Selami Pulaha, *Popullsia shqiptare e Kosovës gjatë shek. XV-XVI*, Tirana, 1983, p. 25, 29, 59; Qemal Murati, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

²⁸ Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век, p. 103; Опширен пописен дефтер N 4, p. 294.

²⁹ История на македонот народ, II, Скопје, 1998, p. 104.

³⁰ Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век, p. 103-105.

inhabitants, of which 200-250 inhabitants were of Muslim affiliation or 15% of the total number and about 1100-1350 or 85% were Christians.³¹

We believe that the increase in Christian families from 1452-1453 to the 1467-1468 census was a result of the extension of the state of Skanderbeg in the Polog region as well. Thus, the influence of Skanderbeg's power in this region caused the real Ottoman power to fade and thus the population was freer in choosing its religious affiliation.

In the 1467-1468 register, we also note newly Islamized family heads, as we find three: *Hamza*, the son of *Melk*, *Mustafa*, the son of *Donci*, and *Mustafa*, the son of *Abduallah*.³² The latter name was typically used by individuals who had recently converted to Islam. The name of the latter was usually borne by persons who had just converted to the Muslim religion.³³

The need to support a large army on a medieval economy led to the development of a system closely associated with its financial, social, and agricultural policies. Due to the medieval economic circumstances, where goods-money exchange relations were not sufficiently developed, and on the other hand continuing its wars of conquest and the need for a centralized state, the Ottoman Empire, following its conquest of the Balkan countries, gradually transformed these territories into typical Ottoman provinces, where the timar system was applied.³⁴

In terms of the population, it was broadly divided into two categories: the military class (sultan, sadriazem, shejh ul-islam, kadiaskeri, defterdar, viziers, beylerbey, kadi, subash, spahi, janissary, imam, etc.) and the common population, the *raja*, both Muslim and Christian. The *raja* was involved in productive activities and was responsible for paying taxes and other obligations to the state and the spahi. Within this stratum were *farmers, merchants, and craftsmen* who produced material goods, which were protected and exploited by the ruling class.³⁵

The second category of society under Ottoman rule was also divided into two main groups, based on their type of residence: those who lived in cities, rural towns, and villages, and the nomads. Each of these groups had distinct rights, privileges, and obligations. Anyone seeking to move from one place to another had to obtain official permission. Among the *raja*, the most privileged were the citizens who had a special status, referred to as *sheherli*. These individuals were exempt from military service, many taxes, and conscription for forced labor imposed on peasants.³⁶

Land, referred to as *eraz-imirie* or state land, was given under exploitation to the ruling class, representing the authority of the sultan, such as leaders, soldiers, and clerics. These land parcels were also called *dirliks* and could not be inherited or sold without the sultan's permission. These land parcels were categorized into three groups: *hass*, *ziamet*, and *timar*.³⁷

Before the Ottoman conquest, peasants paid their obligations to their lord in the form of a tenth of their agricultural production, a ducat, and the obrok (equivalent to 4 grosh or 2/9 of a ducat) for each household.³⁸ Meanwhile, with the establishment of Ottoman rule in the Albanian provinces, including the nahija of Tetovo, the variety and amount of rent that had to be paid to the state and the spahis increased.

The most important part of these annual obligations included the rent that the spahi benefited from, who was also the owner of the *raja*. In general, this feudal rent consisted of three main parts: **1**: The part belonging to the spahi as the landowner, consisting mainly of the tenth of the

³¹Side.: *Опишени пописни дефтери од XV век*, p. 103-105; *Опишени пописни дефтер N 0.4*, p. 293-296.

³²*Опишени пописни дефтер N 0.4*, p. 293.

³³Qerim Dalipi & Besim Morina, *op.cit.*, p. 115.

³⁴Halil Inalcik, *Perandoria Osmane – periudha klasike 1300-1600*, translated by: Edvin Cami, Tirana, 2013, p. 143-145; Selami Pulaha, *Pronësia feudale në tokat shqiptare*, Tirana, 1988, p. 119.

³⁵Stanford J. Shaw, *Historia e Perandorisë Osmane dhe e Turqisë moderne*, Tirana, 2006; p. 181; Halil Inalcik, *Devleti...*, p. 311.

³⁶Stanford J. Shaw, *op.cit.*, p. 182.

³⁷Skender Rizaj, *Historia e përgjithshme – Koha e re (1453-1789)*, Pristina, 1985, p. 46, 47.

³⁸*Historia e popullit shqiptar I...*, p. 382-383; 60 akçe-1 gold or gold ducat (Halil Inalcik, *Devleti...*, p. 271).

production - *yshyri* ; **2** : The portion due to him as the owner of the *raja*, consisting of the taxes of the *raja*, which included the *ispence*, the main tax for the Christians of 25 akçes or the *penda* or *resm-i çift* tax for the Muslims of 22 akçes; **3**: The part of the central duties, respectively that went to the state, was divided into two parts: a) ordinary taxes, which included taxes per head (*Jizya*) in the amount of 45 akçes per house/family, *blood tithe* and cattle tax (*jalepi*) which included the obligation for sheep, goats, fat animals. Usually this tax was paid half an akçe per head of cattle; b) extraordinary taxes consisting of four main obligations *avariz*, *nüzül*, *sürsat* and *ishtira*.³⁹

Below we will present the table for some of the obligations that were present in the city of Tetovo during two censuses:

Census	wheat		Barley and others		Millet		Cider		Amount in akçes									
	bales	amount in akçes	bales	amount in akçes	bales	amount in akçes	medra	amount in akçes	Tithe of linen	Tithe of watermelon	Tithe of fruit	Tithe of cotton	Honey tax	Tax on pigs	Mill tax	Market tax	Ispence	Nijabet
1452-1453	280	/	88	/	50	/	1000	/	200	260	197	400	100	197	375	6200	4586	2000
1467-1468	280	5600	150	1500	/	/	200	18000	/	100	/	100	/	/	/	8500	5224	4000

As can be seen from the data we presented above, from the two registers in question for the city of Tetovo, only those *raja* obligations that were towards their *spahi*, which included the production tithe, the *ispence* tax, the market tax and the *nijabet* tax, are recorded. Meanwhile, these *defters* lack data on the central part of the *raja*'s obligations that were for the benefit of the state. This is because these last taxes were levied separately from the *raja* by a group of tax collectors appointed by the High Porte and were not recorded in the relevant *defters*.

The population living in the cities was more involved in crafts and trade, and instead of the *ispence* tax, they paid the market tax. According to the first registration in the city of Tetovo, this tax was 6,200 akçes, while in the next registration, it reached 8,500 akçes. This 37% increase in the market tax indicates significant economic development in Tetovo during this period, with crafts and trade gradually becoming the primary economic activities in the city. However, in addition to these activities, a significant portion of the inhabitants were also engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, and as a result, these citizens paid both the tithe tax and the *ispence* or *resm-i çift*.⁴⁰

The obligations of the *raja* towards their vassals, arising from the *timar* system, also provide significant data on the economic development of Tetovo in the second half of the 15th century. From the two registers used in this paper, it is noted that the tithe on agricultural crops, such as wheat, was the main part of the obligations. According to the 1452-1453 census, the population of Tetovo gave a wheat tithe to the *subashi* amounting to 280 bales. Since there is no data on the price of wheat at that time, we cannot determine its value in akçes. However, if we make a comparison with the register of the year 1467-1468, where we learn that a load of wheat is 20 akçe, based on this we can make a calculation that during the year 1452-1453 the total amount of wheat in akçes reached the value of 5600 akçe. While during the register of 1467-1468 we do not have any changes regarding the wheat tithe.⁴¹

The second most significant cereal crop was barley and others. In 1452-1453, the *subashi* of Tetovo levied 88 bales from this category. If we multiply this amount by the price in 1467-1468 (10 akçes per bale), the total value of barley and other crops was 880 akçes. Meanwhile,

³⁹*Historia e popullit shqiptar I...*, p. 382-383; 529; Selami Pulaha, *Pronësia feudale në tokat shqiptare...*, p. 128-129, 302; *Krajište Isa-bega Isakovića – zbirni katastarski popis iz 1455 godine*, p. 117-146; *Historia e popullit maqedonas*, Skopje, 1983, p. 81-86; *Историја на македонскиот народ II*, p. 69-78; Aleksandar Stojanovski, *Македонија под турската власт*, Skopje, 2006, p. 173-175.

⁴⁰ *Описни пописни дефтери од XV век*, p. 105; *Описен пописен дефтер N 04*, p. 296.

⁴¹ *Описни пописни дефтери од XV век*, p. 105; *Описен пописен дефтер N 04*, p. 296. (one burden is equal to 153, 960 kg. *Record book of the Sanjak of Shkodra from the year 1485*, prepared by: Selami Pulaha, Tirana, 1974, p. 17.)

during the year 1467-68, this category of grain has an increase of 70% compared to the earliest, reaching a tithe of 150 bales or 1,500 akçes. Additionally, other agricultural products, such as millet, were recorded, though millet was not cultivated at all in the 1467-1468 register.⁴²

The largest income for the city of Tetovo came from its vineyards, which were also the primary source of revenue for the fief. Based on the data, it can be concluded that during the 15th century, viticulture was highly developed in Tetovo. The medra is marked as the unit of measurement for this production. A medra in Hungary in the 16th-17th centuries, during the Turkish occupation, was equivalent to 8 okes. Since one oke equals 1.283 kilograms, a medra would be 10.264 kg.⁴³ The cider tithe in the defter of 1467-1468 appears recorded in two forms: yshyr from the vineyard and yshyr from the wine. This division occurred because Muslims were also engaged in viticulture, and they paid taxes on their vineyards based on dynym. For each dynym, a Muslim raja paid 4 akçes. Meanwhile, for a pair of vineyards, the tax value could be 8, 6, 5, or 4 akçes. The price of a medra of wine ranged between 5 to 6 akçes. Additionally, the data from the registers show that the spahi-subashi held a monopoly on the sale of wine. According to Ottoman laws, he could choose one or two months a year to sell the wine collected from the tithe.⁴⁴

In the 1452-1453 census, cider was recorded only in volumetric quantities of 1,000 medras, not in akçes. However, based on the price of a medra being 5-6 akçes, the cider rent for this year amounted to 5,000 to 6,000 akçes. Moreover, Arbër subashi Hasan bey collected an additional 500 medras of cider from his economic plot, *hass*, in the city of Tetovo. In the 1467-1468 census, the quantity is not recorded since it was sometimes collected in dynym, sometimes in cifte, and sometimes in medras. However, the income in akçes amounted to 18,000 akçes, a 200% increase in revenue for subashi Sulejman bey. This total includes an additional 3,000 akçes collected from the vineyards in the form of *hass*.⁴⁵

Another economic activity in Tetovo was beekeeping. In the 1452-1453 register, a honey tax was recorded as part of the obligations of the raja towards the subashi. It is not clearly defined whether these beekeepers had to pay a tithe on their production or just a tax for this activity. Some researchers suggest that this rent consisted of a tithe on production. Beekeepers with fewer than 10 hives paid 1-2 akçes per hive.⁴⁶ In the 1452-1453 census, the honey tax amounted to 100 akçes. However, in the 1467-1468 register, no income from this economic activity was recorded.⁴⁷

The raja of the nahija of Tetovo was also charged with the pig tax. According to Mehmed II's canon, this tax was levied at the rate of one akçe for every two heads of pigs kept by residents. Additionally, Christians who slaughtered a pig for Christmas had to pay 2 akçes for each pig. This tax was also called the Christmas tax.⁴⁸ The total amount of the pig tax for Tetovo in the 1452-1453 register was 197 akçes.⁴⁹

Among the various taxes paid by the peasants to their spahi, was also the mill tax. The tax was levied depending on whether the mill worked for the whole year. If it worked for a full year, the raja had to pay 30 akçes, while if it worked for only half a year, the tax was 15 akçes. In the 1452-1453 register, the mill tax amounted to 4,455 akçes. However, this tax did not appear in the 1467-1468 register.⁵⁰

In the second half of the 15th century, with the centralization of power in the Ottoman Empire, trade and economic development were stimulated. In addition to many dimensions of economic

⁴²Опирни пописни дефтери од XV век, р. 105; Опирен пописен дефтер N 04, р. 296.

⁴³The detailed notebook for the areas of Dibra from the year 1467, translated by: Vexhi Buharaja, prepared for publication: Eduart Caka, Tirana, 2019, р. 8.

⁴⁴Опирни пописни дефтери N 04, р. 14-15.

⁴⁵Опирни пописни дефтери од XV век, р. 103, 105; Опирен пописен дефтер N 04, р. 293, 296.

⁴⁶Опирни пописни дефтери N 04..., р. 15.

⁴⁷Опирни пописни дефтери од XV век, р. 105; Опирен пописен дефтер N 04, р. 296.

⁴⁸Опирни пописни дефтери N 04..., р. 15.

⁴⁹Опирни пописни дефтери од XV век, р. 105; Опирен пописен дефтер N 04, р. 296.

⁵⁰*ibid.*

development, the textile industry had a special importance in the Ottoman state. During this century, Bursa had become an international granary for quality silk exported to Europe.⁵¹ The developed silk industry in the Ottoman Empire also affected Tetovo. From the two defters used, it is noted that Tetovo paid a tithe on silk bags as part of the feudal rent. In the 1452-1453 census, Tetovo paid 400 akçes from this tithe, but by the 1467-1468 census, this economic activity had decreased, and only 100 akçes were collected in this city.⁵²

In addition to these data from the 15th century, we are also informed about diverse professions that were practiced in the city of Tetovo related to economic life. The crafts that are mentioned were: tailors, hatters, dyers, saddlers, butchers, blacksmiths, carpenters, farriers, shoemakers, etc. A large number of these crafts are a clear indication that during the second half of the 15th century Tetovo had turned into a craft and commercial center in the entire Polog valley.

Conclusion

The Ottoman records from 1452-1453 and 1467-1468 for the nahija of Tetovo are valuable sources for understanding the socio-economic, demographic, and ethnic developments of the city. These records reveal a well-organized administrative and military structure that profoundly influenced the transformation of the city from a village into an important center of the entire Polog valley.

The process of Islamization, which was still in its early stages during this period, reflects the numerous political, social, and economic influences of Ottoman rule in the region. Changes in the religious affiliation of the population, with the presence of both Muslim and Christian communities, reflect the complex dynamics of religious coexistence and cultural transition. While the number of Muslim families decreased significantly from the first to the second census, the growth of Christian families suggests the extension of Skanderbeg's power and the weakening of direct Ottoman control in the region.

From the economic point of view, the records document the development of agriculture, viticulture, and handicrafts in the city of Tetovo. The tithe on agricultural products, particularly the cider from the vineyards, highlights the city's developed economy. Additionally, the craft activities, including textile production and other trades, underline the transformation of Tetovo into an economic center for the Polog valley.

From an ethnic perspective, the analysis of anthroponyms and patronymics suggests the continued presence of the Arbërs in Tetovo and its surrounding areas, despite the efforts of the Slavic Church to assimilate the Orthodox Albanians. These anthroponomic data support the argument for the autochthony of the Albanian population in the region, shedding light on their efforts to preserve their identity through anthroponymy.

In conclusion, these Ottoman records are not only statistical evidence, but also rich insights into the political, social, religious and economic dynamics that shaped the city of Tetovo during the 15th century.

⁵¹ Halil İnalcık, *An economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire*, v. I, Cambridge, 1994, p. the same, *Devleti...*, p. 148-150; the same, *Ottoman Empire...*, p. 162-163.

⁵² Опшрни пописни дефтери од XV век р. 105; Опшрен пописен дефтер No 4, р. 296.

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