

A Defter Note of 1489 about the Founding of Sarajevo

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Context

The detailed survey register BOA TT24 from 1489, the first detailed (*mufassal*) Survey Register for Bosnia to have been preserved in full, offers considerable insights into the development of an urban centre downstream from the stronghold of Hodidede. In a *defter* recording on page 35 and 36 of this volume, immediately below the names of the four arable fields (*mezraa*) recorded as being in the possession of the inhabitants of the town of Saray (starting with Rakovica), the scribe refers to the village of Brodča (Brodac). This village had been recorded in the survey register of 1468/9 as the first village belonging to the market of Torkovište right after the four arable fields (without inhabitants) of Rakovica, Kakrin, Kotoriča and Vojković (?), listing three Muslim households, twelve Christian and two unmarried.¹ By 1489, however, the date of completion of BOA TT24, the situation had changed dramatically – at least for the inhabitants of Brodac, the village that had already been recorded in the *vakfname* of 1462 written in Arabic by which Īsa Beg founded a *tekke* ‘in the village of Brodac [situated] in one of the districts of Saray Ovasi’ (lit. *dāḥil qaryati Brodġa min a‘māli Sarāy Ovasi*). According to the *defter* entry just mentioned, Brodča village had, by 1489, not only lost large parts of its peasant inhabitants (with only eight Christian, one widowed and three Muslim households remaining), but much of its grounds, too – in other words: it had been drawn into the orbit of a rising urban centre. It had, in modern terms, become the object of urban development. The man instrumental in this process is identified in the entry as Īsa Beġ (Ishaković) himself, until 1470 *sancakbeġi* of Bosnia. The exact wording is as follows:

“... and the grounds on which the city of Saray was built were originally plots belonging to the unbelievers of Brodac village. [But] because the late Īsa Beġ thought it proper to erect a city (*şehir*) [here], he took (or bought) [those plots] from the aforementioned unbelievers, giving the unbelievers the place called Vrančić in exchange”.

Vrančić, according to Mušeta-Aščerić, is situated in the area of Hrasnice village a few kilometres southwest of Sarajevo, a little beyond Ilidža.

¹ Ahmed A. Aličić, *Sumarni popis sandžaka Bosna iz 1468/69. godine* (Mostar, 2008), p. 69f.

The same defter entry also reveals that additional ‘urbanistic’ developments had taken place at about the same time. Referring to the *mezraa* of Kakrin, our entry reveals that it had been the sowing grounds belonging to the unbelievers of the *varoş* of Saray who had come into its ownership at their own free choice in order to till it, and that their names were written in the *hüccets* issued by Mevlana Zahid, *kadi* of Saray. The text goes on saying:

“But then İskender Pasha bought it (on the open market). Before that, İskender Pasha had also bought the *voynuklık* plot [ground held by an armed horseman generally of Vlach origin often living in a tent] called Iskubriç [according to Aličić tentatively read as Vojković] belonging to the *voynuk* (horseman) Đure, son of Pop, situated in the vicinity of the *varoş*, in order to turn it into an orchard, giving Đure with mutual accord the *mezraa* of Kakrin in exchange. He was consequently registered as a *voynuk* in the *mezraa* of Kakrin, while his former *voynuk* plot was turned into an orchard”.

This İskender Pasha, the second ‘developer’ named in our source, is no other than İskender Voyvoda, the lieutenant of İsa Beğ (Ishaković).² It is worth noting that the *voynuklık* of Vojković (?), being described as being situated ‘in the vicinity of the *varoş*’, is being turned into an orchard (a potential building plot), while its former owner is transferred, together with his (military) obligations but also with his former rights of ownership, to the *mezraa* of Kakrin which had been worked by the inhabitants of the *varoş* at some distance from there (Kakrin lies to the southwest of Sarajevo near present-day Ilidža).

This entry in BOA TT24 clearly underlines the repeated interference by the *sancak* government in the local fabric of small privately owned agricultural holdings being bought up in the area of the later city of Sarajevo against compensation of the former owners with land further away from this increasingly urban zone. It is worth noting that the former owners, standing as it were in the way of the ‘urbanistic’ intentions of the governor and his lieutenant, were not simply removed, but compensated for their losses.

² Vesna Mušeta-Aščerić, “Sarajevo – od kasabe do šehera”, in: Eadem., *Sarajevo i okolina u XV stoljeću: između zapada i istoka* (Sarajevo 2005), 143-97; here: 147, note 450.

Furthermore, the process of being removed and the details of being compensated were carefully recorded in the present Survey Register.

Transcription

- (1) *Mezra 'a-i Raḳoviçe mezra 'a-i Ḳuḳurinçe mezra 'a-i Isḳovnik (?) [Aličić: Vojković (?)] mezra 'a-i Ḳaḳrin*
- (2) *bu zikr olan mezra 'alar nefis-i Sarāyın ekinliklerdir*
- (3) *ammā mezkūr Ḳaḳrin nām mezra 'a varoş keferesiniñ ekinlikler olub kendü ihtiyārlarıyla*
- (4) *mezbūr mezra 'aya mālİK olub zirā 'at idüb kimesneler ki esāmİleri Sarāy ḳādısı Mevlānā Zāhid*
- (5) *ḥüccetinde meştürdir İskender Pāşā ḥazretleri şirā 'i 'örfiyle alub ve bundan aḳdem Güre veled-i Pop nām*
- (6) *voynuḡıñ varoş ḳurbında olan Isḳomrik [Aličić: Vojković (?)] nām voynuḳlık yirini mezbūr İskender Pāşā şirā 'i*
- (7) *'örfiyle alub bāḡçe iderek Ḳaḳrin nām mezra 'ayı müşārün ileyh Güreyle ṫarafeynden ihtiyārıyla istibdāl olma ki*
- (8) *mezkūra mezbūr Ḳaḳrin üzerine voynuḳ ḳayd olub ve mezbūr voynuḡıñ yiri bāḡçe olub*
- (9) *(p. 36:) ve nefis-i Sarāyın yiri fi'l-aşli Bro(d)ca nām ḳarye kefereleriniñ yirleriymiş merḥūm 'İsā Beg*
- (10) *şehir bünyād itmegi lāyık gördüḡi sebebden mezbūr kāfİrlerden alub Virancik nām*
- (11) *yiri kāfİrlere bedel virmiş.*

Facsimile

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Detail from BOA TD 24 (1489), p. 35

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Continued: BOA TD 24 (1489), p. 36

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